

Alexander Tolstykh



Man and His Stages of Life

PROGRESS PUBLISHERS

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and
His Stages
of Life**



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THE STUDY OF THE STAGES OF LIFE

(Preface)

The problems posed in *Man and His Stages of Life* are of immense moral importance. The multiplicity of problems that modern man encounters in the course of his life occur, in our opinion, because at the present time concepts concerning age-related possibilities and obligations are rather diffuse. For example the desire of certain young people to avoid responsibility for their behaviour (this is broadly encompassed by the concept of "infantilism") occasionally acquires such ugly forms that the significance of that period in human life which we describe as youth should be the object of serious study in order to establish its essence and limitations with greater clarity. And what of the numerous problems of childhood so prevalent throughout the world today? Most schools have not yet learned to take sufficient account of particular aspects of age-specific transitions—namely from childhood to adolescence, from adolescence to youth, etc. All this relates to a major problem, namely how to approach man in such a way as to help him find his place in this complicated world. An important role in solving that problem must be played by age-related psychology, which studies the development of a society's self-awareness.

Age-related psychology helps man in acquiring the ability to comprehend himself and to understand his responsibility for his actions and for his present and future life in accordance with his age category.

In my opinion age-related psychology is only preparing for the appropriate role it will play in that field of knowledge that the Russian author Maxim Gorky described as, "knowledge of man". Age-related psychology is a humanistic discipline, but under the pressure of circumstances humanistic education in its widest meaning has clearly receded to the background in recent decades, yielding a leading role to the natural and technical sciences. For the Soviet Union such a situation was a matter of practical necessity deriving from the period of reconstruction following the Great Patriotic War against nazi Germany (1941-1945). Soviet industrial and agricultural enterprises

were almost completely destroyed on Nazi occupied territory during the war. This made it necessary for the Soviet people to place the greatest possible emphasis on the sphere of material production. Beyond this, in peacetime as well, the Soviet Union must give considerable thought to the needs of the country's defense and to the development of science and technology so that the Soviet people might live in peace and never know the horrors of another war.

But the revolution in science and technology, having partly displaced humanitarian issues into the background within overall social development, has also sharply intensified them. It is true that, with regard to the problem of age groups, today's young people adapt to the epoch's innovations with far greater ease than earlier generations and become accustomed much more quickly to new technical achievements. But how is that adaptability to be measured? Specialists note that children are now developing more rapidly, and indeed they are. They are being taught at an earlier age. But is it always the case that the pace at which modern children grow is also matched by corresponding qualitative changes in their personality?

Problems of old age, too, are being defined in a new way. It now arrives much later and its character has greatly changed, for, its emphasis on youth notwithstanding, the scientific and technical revolution cannot obviate the need to employ older and more experienced workers in all areas of social production.

The psychological attitudes of individuals have also changed: they seek to serve social progress through their work for as long and as effectively as possible. In short, the number of problems has rapidly grown while a perception of their meaning is often unjustifiably delayed. In such a context the publication of *Man and His Stages of Life*, whose author, a psychologist, offers a competent interpretation of man's age-related problems, is a welcome event. Though interest in these questions is apparent throughout the world, scientists, it seems to me, continue to be slow in turning to the essence of the questions that bear on the age related psychology of human life.

As I read the work of Alexander Tolstykh, I was reminded of a scenario that begins with the words of a ten-year-old boy, the character used by the author to present his narrative of the early years of the First World War... The

boy was standing next to an old woman at the edge of a railroad track, heated by the sun, breathing with pleasure its odour of heavy oil and coal dust. His entire appearance and the expression of his face and burning eyes spoke of a hidden longing for travel and for long journeys... and in springtime when the entire earth revives, what ten-year-old boy does not feel a longing for the future? A train passed by and, watching it disappear, the boy complained: "Why am I still small? How often have I heard that I will grow up? I hear this all the time and yet I somehow remain small?" The old woman replied: "Don't worry, you will grow up, learn, marry, become old, then die—all these things will happen..."

It is that simple reckoning concerning the inevitability of life and death that is so characteristic of common people. It is both very deep and natural, and seems to me to be that classical measure in terms of which modern man, too, can, or more precisely must, approach the fact of his existence on Earth. This is an obligation, a duty. It unquestionably includes an ability to understand one's self and one's place in life throughout all its phases. Yet such an ability does not arise automatically. It requires learning. One must learn to be young, to be mature, and to be old...

In reading the pages of *Man and His Stages of Life* I could see that this concept is also supported by historical facts which are cited in the text and again point to the same extremely important proposition: that there exists a special art—the art of living, to create one's own life, not by responding to the arbitrary demands of one's self-exalted ego concerned only with hedonistic strivings but according to the law of a social and historical development of human personality and in accordance with best examples of modern culture. It is precisely through such a combination of joint creativity of man and nature that the natural state of persons at a particular age becomes the actual human existence.

Several years ago, working as a film director, I completed work on a film devoted to the great Russian writer Lev Tolstoy. Already at that time a man of the age of Tolstoy, I could not but think of the problems of the development of the individual during his life in the context of Tolstoy's own powerful personality, his reflections on life and death, childhood, adolescence, maturity and old age. It is striking that while all these questions appear in a somewhat differ-

ent light today one cannot ignore the fact that for the human race itself they represent eternal problems.

Lev Tolstoy provides an outstanding example of one of the great human spirits in perceiving the meaning of life. Of course he too made errors, assumed extreme positions, and was a maximalist on many issues. But the power of his thought mercilessly revealed various contradictions of life, and an unfailing moral sense led him to seek their resolution. Many of these problems were purely age-related, bearing on relations between persons of different ages (with his children, with young writers) and on man's painful self-awareness in old age, on the revelations of wisdom, struggles with erotic passions in youth, and much more. Tolstoy, moreover, emphasised the truly unlimited possibilities of self-education. In this respect he is very close to people in our own society, and in fact to all people in various parts of our small planet who believe in human progress and are actively striving to achieve it.

I believe that Lev Tolstoy would uphold the proposition that man's awareness of his age must be perfected as a source and moving force of one's own self-improvement. For in one way or another, all of Tolstoy's reflections centre on a key point, namely a striving to further perfect the human race. In this regard he attributed a decisive role to the individual's moral self-improvement. For each person such a self-improvement can begin with acquiring an ability to realistically evaluate oneself with respect to one's specific age with due account of all relevant consequences. Each of us should possess a measure of self-criticism, self-control, and self-irony. When a person is able to view himself critically he is already standing on the path of self-perfection. And it is tragic when a man loses that ability. Self-satisfaction and self-righteousness are the first symptoms of degradation. These were the first symptoms foretelling the worst times of the Ancient World's most powerful civilizations. And individuals today would do well to remember this.

Above all, self-criticism is a path to gaining true knowledge of one's own self. Because this is often neglected, as if it were so much moral excess, much has been lost. Alexander Tolstykh persuasively demonstrates the nature of the truly immense reserves that are inherent in man's awareness of his age, and how much he can gain from a more

accurate understanding of the very essence of life stages. These thoughts are in full harmony with the scope of social thinking of persons living in socialist societies who are characterized by an unconditional striving to attain a better world for man and by a thirst for the unlimited development of his personality and unique individuality.

I thought it appropriate in a short preface to express first of all my own attitude to what is stated by the author. But I would also like to note the richness of this work's contents. Readers will find a versatile discourse on philosophical, historical-cultural, psychological, pedagogic and other aspects of its theme. One reads this work with interest, and it leads to independent reflections concerning the complex problems of the psychology of the stages of life. It clearly expresses the author's position, which clearly defines the human ideals that guide it. I believe that readers in other countries will find it interesting to learn the issues that are being discussed and studied by Soviet scientists as they consider the complex problems of man's psychological life.

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People's Artist of the USSR

INTRODUCTION

The life of modern man is diverse and offers a wide range of aspects for study and reflection. But relatively few phenomena in the world are able to arouse universal interest. A subject that might be of passionate interest to some individuals may leave others indifferent. Yet there are phenomena in life that are of great concern to everyone, that cause individuals to search for the meaning underlying an entire complex of vitally important problems. The problem of man's life stages is such an example. This is due to the fact that persons belonging to the most diverse professions and representing many sciences are engaged in finding "their own" answers to the complex problems of human existence. Philosophers reflecting on the ultimate source of the meaning of existence and thought look for the meaning of age categories in man's life; medicine tries to subordinate the seemingly irreversible course of aging to human reason in order to preserve man's health and a youthful spirit; jurists seek to define the legal norms that should govern work activities of various age categories of the population, taking into account problems relating to the protection of child labour and to the work of pension-age individuals; teachers see the specific age characteristics of children as containing prerequisites for perfecting the teaching process; and demographers, sociologists and anthropologists have their own specific interest in the problem of aging, not to mention psychologists who study the age-related psychological principles governing the development of the human personality.

While noting the unquestionable scientific importance of the problem of aging it should be added that teachings relating to it cannot remain a purely theoretical question, i.e., a problem where knowledge is separated from life and reality and where theory is divorced from practice.

In response to the universal interest in the problem of life stages which expresses itself in different forms among youth, mature adults and the old, we will seek to avoid a dry academic approach to the subject while still basing our study on scientific facts. We will also try to avoid as much

as possible an excessive use of terminology, even though it is, of course, not possible to avoid describing a number of scientific concepts. Naturally there are limits to attempts to simplify the style of exposition, for not everything can be stated "simply" as this may distort a scientific perspective. We wish to stress this seemingly secondary issue at the very beginning of the study because the universal interest in problems of age brings with it many misleading concepts. The problem is that a specific set of interests in the theme is matched by a corresponding set of opinions. The English saying "so many men, so many minds" fully applies to the problem of life stages. No one would think of passing judgment on Albert Einstein's theory of relativity, for example, or Niels Bohr's correspondence principle if he were not an expert physicist. Everyone would agree that these topics are too complex to be considered by the layman. But the situation is different with regard to the psychology of aging. There we do not find comparable self-restraint. Nearly every person has a specific age-related self-awareness and has experienced living within a particular age group. This makes it possible to express views without considering too closely the findings of scientific theory.

Moreover many persons consider the problem of man's life stages to be simple. There are some grounds for such an illusion. What could be simpler, it might seem, than to distinguish between people of various age groups. This does not require that one be a professional in the field of age-related psychology. No one will fail to distinguish between a child and an adult, a young person and a mature person, a person in the prime of his years and an aged person. We do not hesitate in saying "a person of your age..." which may imply a host of associations. "When I was your age, young man, it never occurred to me to worry about health." "A person your age should take his studies seriously;" the familiar words of parents, "When I was your age...", and finally the sad phrase, "If only one could bring back those years, if only one could return to that age..."

If you ask a three-year-old child "How old are you?" you will frequently hear a detailed response: "Three years, six months, and three days." The initial inference also appears to be simple and self-evident, namely that the notion of age is a natural element of our self-awareness in the sense that it is organically inherent in each person. But why

then, one may ask, is scientific research needed?

Persons specializing in the field of age-related psychology generally respond to that naive question with indignation.

The reader is of course aware that today various scientific forums are held concerning questions of age periodization and personality development. Today there are lively discussions of the relative role of "pedagogic" and "psychological" elements in the problem of life stages and one of the many questions that are considered is whether age is a "natural" or a "social" concept.

One should not be deceived by the apparent "simplicity" of the concept of age for this hides many scientific problems. This is in fact the subject of the present study.

It has already been noted that the problem of age is studied by a number of modern sciences each of which considers the topic from its own point of view and has in mind its own concrete objectives and types of research. In particular the age-related psychology that will be considered here is concerned with the age-related changes in man's psyche and with the formative processes in human personality.

But the requirements of modern scientific studies are such that any scientific discipline can develop productively only within a complex of other sciences. This is why in the present study I have used data from the most diverse disciplines adjoining psychological analysis.

In placing the problem of research into age characteristics within a specific system of coordinates, one of which refers to the psychological characteristics and the other to the aggregate of data relating to other disciplines concerned with the study of man, we should be aware of the scale that we view as optimal for the present analysis. If that scale should be small, the phenomena being observed may appear to be insignificant and indistinguishable in actual practice because of excessive generalizations. Such a perspective from great distances is hardly appropriate for those who study the age-related psychology. And conversely if the classification of human life stages is too detailed, one can immerse oneself into an ocean of facts, all of which appear to be important.

We thus encounter the eternal problem of the golden mean, namely, how to convey to the reader existing wide-

ranging findings while avoiding the extremes resulting from differences in scale?

Help in finding a solution to the problem is provided by adopting a clear and consistent scientific position in viewing all questions of age-related psychology. We do not recognize the positivist fear of adhering to principles in formulating scientific problems that is camouflaged in terms of the "objectivity of data" allegedly obtained through "purely scientific methods" independent of any philosophy, world view, or methodological foundation. A fact becomes scientific when it is obtained from actual reality, but also, and this is equally important, when it has found its place within a specific explanatory system and a specific logic of scientific cognition, which in its turn depends directly on the reference norms of one's world view and methodology.

In studying the problem of age we have adopted from the first the sound foundations of Marxist-Leninist methodology and of corresponding dialectical materialist teachings concerning the principles that govern the development of the psyche. The most consistent elaboration of these teachings has been contributed by the school of Soviet psychologists associated with Lev Vygotsky, Alexei Leontiev, and Alexander Luria. In scientific circles this line of thought has come to be described as the "psychological theory of activity". Its development has resulted from productive dialogues with other scientific systems, both within the Soviet Union and in other countries.

Psychological theory of activity makes it possible to consider, explain and include within its own context the most diverse facts collected by different researchers with due regard for other scientific positions.

It is sometimes asked: What renders meaningful the work of psychologists studying problems of man's stages of life and clarifying age-related characteristics of human life as well as their psychological "content"? In part, establishing age-related possibilities and reserves of psychological activities of specific age groups. In part, too, providing practical assistance to individuals of various age groups in solving their specific problems. But still another aspect is even more important.

In our opinion it is justifiable to compare the work of psychologists studying the man's life stages with the work of an architect. Just as the architect is concerned with

structuring living spaces for human existence so psychologists are concerned with problems relating to the organization of man's life.

This is the proposition that also underlies the structure of the present study. The first chapter is concerned with fundamental theoretical issues of age-related psychology. In the second chapter, in accordance with the scientific position that we have chosen, the problem is subjected to a cultural and historical analysis. The remaining chapters are directly addressed to a characterization of man's basic life stages, primarily from a psychological point of view.

“Time is the room of human development.”
Karl Marx

CHAPTER 1

AGE AS A PROBLEM

Age-related Psychology and the Theory of Personality

Prisoners of the “Two Factors” Theory

Object-related Activity

Age Boundaries

Life Periods

Age-related Psychology and the Theory of Personality

We live in time. This refers to the universe which surrounds us, the cosmos, nature, and the so-called "noosphere" that is the world of human culture and civilization. V. I. Lenin noted that, "Time is a form of being of objective reality."¹

Human personalities constitute an unquestionable fact, an objective reality of man's existence in time. In this sense, each individual may be viewed over time and may possess time-related characteristics in seconds, minutes, hours, days, months, years, etc. We may turn to various systems for measuring time, for example, to the science of time—chronology—and make use of mathematical, astronomical, or historical scales or else of cyclical or linear calendars. In all these cases we encounter the fundamental fact that matter exists in time.

All that exists in time possesses its own age—Egyptian pyramids and ancient manuscripts, trees and birds, rivers and oceans. And the simplest initial concept of age refers to its definition as a function of time.

There is no doubt that human personalities develop in a purposeful manner. And that development's final moment is clearly defined, namely death, which Soviet scientist Vladimir Vernadsky has described as the "separation of space and time".²

At the same time psychologists will insist that age is not merely a simple function of time. This is why the chronological approach in psychology yields little. For chronologically age is measured by the number of years that a person has lived from the time of his birth, while age-related changes in an individual cannot be directly proportional to the number of years that a person has lived. There are complex

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Conspectus of Hegel's Book, *The Science of Logic*", *Collected Works*, Vol. 38, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1976, p. 227.

² V. I. Vernadsky, *Khimicheskoe stroenie biosfery. Zemlia i ee okruzhenie* (The Chemical Composition of the Biosphere. The Earth and Its Environment), Moscow, Nauka, 1965, p. 135.

mediated relations between the two.

As Lev Vygotsky, a Soviet psychologist, emphasized, the course of a personality's development does not at all resemble the even and gradual movement of a clock's hand, and the significance of a particular year in a person's development is never equal to that of another year.

Age is above all a set of phenomena that lend themselves to observation, rather than simply the number of years that have been lived. But even this is only partly true since phenomenology itself can explain neither the significance nor the meaning of various ages of human life nor the individual's age self-awareness.

The subject of age-related psychology is the study of changes in the human psyche and of the development and formation of personality.

According to the teachings of dialectical materialism development presupposes irreversible and directed changes in matter and consciousness in accordance with certain principles. From the point of view of ontogenesis, the principle of development applies fully to human life. For already in relation to a newly-born child we define without hesitation the principal landmarks in its age-related development, namely, infancy, childhood, adolescence, youth, maturity, old age and death. Death, of course, can also occur at earlier stages. But it cannot change the character and sequence of individual stages of life. Thus age-related psychology considers man's psychological development from the time of his birth to that of his death.

At the same time, age-related psychology considers the development of an individual in the process of its formation, and considers a person's life path as an integral process. Yet, a person's life path is divided into a number of stages. This is why it is appropriate to speak of the concept of stages of life filled with qualitatively different psychological contents that replace each other in the course of the individual's formation and progress.

For a relatively long time psychologists were simply absorbed in the study of the different changes that take place in the life of a person. Generally they noted individual psychological processes, phenomena and states of the psyche. At best comparisons were made of changes in the psychological states but these were by no means viewed as an integral process or single course of personali-

ty development. Child psychology studied the psychology of children while studies of adult personalities fell under general psychology, that is under studies of psychological processes present in all persons regardless of their age. Finally, phenomena relating to the aging of organisms were modestly studied by gerontology. Today, in our opinion, the role of a general psychological theory of personality is being assumed more and more explicitly by age-related psychology.¹ This is primarily because it proceeds entirely from the idea of becoming and progressing, that is, of age-related changes in personality development. That is why the concepts of "age-related psychology" and "psychology of personality" also constitute an integral unity and represent a major approach in psychological studies of personality development.

In the present study we have sought to rely on modern scientific findings in presenting an integral perspective on the development of the individual's personality and further advances at various age-related stages of his life, from birth to advanced old age. It is probably best to begin this analysis with a consideration of the essence of processes of age-related personality development, of its mechanisms and moving forces.

Prisoners of the "Two Factor" Theory

There have been many attempts in the history of thought to define man's essence. But what is the present view of modern psychology?

If one turns to the numerous psychological studies of earlier years one may see why there was so much disharmony whenever such a fundamental question as defining the essence, mechanisms and moving forces of human development was addressed. Yet one could clearly discern two distinct lines that ultimately associated the problem with establishing the roles played by two factors—biological and social—as well as a search for compromise by those who

¹ We will not consider in detail here the history of the acceptance of the idea of development into the thinking of psychologists and the adventures of age-related psychology as a general psychological theory of the personality. These are two major distinct questions that call for separate comprehensive discussions.

asserted that these two factors tended to converge.

Let us examine the arguments presented by the different sides in order to clarify more fully the essence of the struggle of the "two factors" in theoretical psychology.

As a point of departure let us take the study of Stanley Hall, a well-known American psychologist. In studying child psychology, Hall formulated the proposition that it is impossible to understand age on the basis of an aggregate of its symptomatic attributes. He pointed to sufficiently persuasive reasons for asserting that a psychological basis must be found that would make it possible to perceive age as an integral phenomenon that lends itself to an integral psychological explanation. He then proposed the idea of biological universalism as such a foundation, i.e., the dependence of specific psychological characteristics of various ages on essentially biological causes.

The biogenetic approach in psychology possesses its own prehistory.

For a long time the theory of preformism played a dominant role in psychology's attempt to understand the process of man's development. The essence of that theory, which is biological in its origins, consists in the proposition that the unborn child already represents a developed organism possessing the same structure and form as the mature organism but in extremely small dimensions. According to that theory man's entire future is already present in the reproductive cells, albeit in miniature form and the process of his development is essentially one of quantitative growth. The child was seen as a small adult and the adolescent as a somewhat older child, etc. We do not propose to comment on that point of view. The development of embryology brought the theory of preformism to an end, and it has in effect ceased to be discussed in scientific circles although it continues to exist in the everyday thinking of some individuals.

In the 1920s and 1930s a wide role the theory of recapitulation (repetition) gained favour among psychologists. Its theoretical principles were borrowed from embryology, the field in which two German scientists, Ernst Haeckel and Georg Müller, formulated a biogenetic law stating that ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny, i.e., that the individual development of an organism repeats the development of the group to which that organism belongs. This constituted

the transfer of the mutual relations between an organism's individual development (ontogeny) and its historical development (phylogeny) to the child's psychological development. In short it was asserted that following his birth, an individual repeats the stages of development of the entire human race. Clearly the principle of recapitulation stands in opposition to the theory of preformism by asserting that a child is a being that develops qualitatively and is not merely a miniature adult.

There is no doubt that this was a deeply progressive thought that pointed to the need to introduce the principle of development (historicism) in studying both man's ontogeny and his phylogeny—a task that, as we have noted earlier, has not lost its relevance today. It should also be noted that this proposition possesses a philosophical foundation as well. For example Hegel, in his widely-known *Phenomenology of Mind*, observed that “the particular individual, so far as content is concerned, has also to go through the stages through which the general mind has passed...”¹ Anticipating somewhat let us note that the concept of recapitulation is also highly relevant today in considering the psychological development of man's personality, since it makes it possible to establish certain aspects of the process through which children assimilate social experience. Yet while recognizing the possibilities of the theory of recapitulation in general, one should view critically those of its variants that are directly associated with biogenetic interpretations of man's psychological development (as for example in the case of Stanley Hall and James Baldwin). Because the explanatory principles on which these authors rely refer to the biological determination of psychological life, their efforts to view the ontogeny of psychological development in a historical context were clearly artificial. In particular some adherents to that theory interpreted the psychological development of children as repetitions of the stage of early savagery, nomadic life, etc.

A positive achievement of the biogenetic school was its genetic approach to the study of the psyche (the study of its development). Its weakness and shortcoming, on the other hand, lies in reducing that development to biological

¹ G. W. F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1931, p. 89.

mechanisms. This is precisely why the biogenetic law did not meet with recognition, for its very basis contained a serious flaw. That law does not take into consideration the fundamental difference that exists between the environment within which the development of the human race occurs and that of individual development. According to that law the two are equivalent and this led to an abstract form of thinking which diverted attention from historical, cultural and social principles governing man's psychological development.

Current biogenetic theories emphasize the role of "inherent characteristics" (hereditary traits) in psychological development. But in one way or another they all emphasize the idea of spontaneous psychological development and its independence from learning and education, which are viewed by biogeneticists as merely "external factors". In this way the relation between an individual's organic development with the world of history, culture and society appears as one that is purely external, and this results in a simplified mechanistic interpretation of personality development, which is viewed as being subordinated to instinctual mechanisms, changes in the endocrine system and various constitutional characteristics of organisms.

Understandably, such a vulgar biological approach to processes of psychological development produced a feeling of dissatisfaction among many psychologists who were aware of the role of the social environment in man's psychological development. Unfortunately their critique of the biogenetic approach was associated with asserting a "sociogenetic concept", which was no less erroneous and led to either stilted metaphysical constructions or else to vulgar sociological interpretations of the process of personality development.

An example of a speculative conception of the "sociogenetic type" is provided by the theory of psychological development elaborated by Eduard Spranger, a German psychologist writing in the 1920s and the 1930s, which became popular in the West again in the late 1960s and the early 1970s.

Spranger rejected natural scientific interpretations of the psyche based on biological and physiological data relating to the higher nervous system and created a theory of

its "spiritual development". In his view, spiritual development represents the unfolding of individual psychological life from within in the direction of a greater internal differentiation and increase in the value of integral psychological unity. Spranger defines spiritual development as the growing of an individual's soul into an objective normative spirit or "supraindividual spiritual relations". He maintains that in childhood the maturing process opens fields of culture to man that were achieved by those strata or classes of society within which he lives and into which the given "maturing individual" becomes embedded. It is only through participation in supraindividual structures (society) that individual souls become subjective spirits and enter into the sphere of a value-related world view, i.e., acquire form with regard to the sphere of social life.

In his classification of life forms Spranger defined forms and types of values that were extratemporal, as it were, and possessed, in his opinion, a lasting significance as basic human reference norms. And while he viewed the development of the individual spirit in a historical aspect, he conceived it not as the actual development of man and of society but only as that of his spiritual sphere.

At the other pole of the sociogenetic approach we find the works of many foreign authors and some Soviet psychologists of the 1920s and 1930s whose main propositions may be reduced to the following: the basic factor in human development is man's adaptation to his social environment; the social environment is the fatal factor in the development of a child and accordingly studies of the environment automatically result in a study of individuals developing in that environment; an individual's consciousness dissolves, as it were, in his behaviour and there is accordingly no need to consider this in such studies.

While emphasizing correctly the role of the social environment in personality development, these psychologists directly associated the influence of the social environment with the development of the psyche. This unquestionably simplified the actual state of affairs while the proposition relating to the fatal character of environmental influences to which one should adapt reduced the individual to the position of a "cog" in a social "machine". In this respect one could see the closeness of extreme sociologizing and extreme biologizing positions. In both cases the biological (hered-

itary) or environmental factor (small group, collective, class) converge, as it were, and are presented as fatal, that is, inevitable and unavoidable determining elements in the development of human personality, which itself is assigned the role of a passive being that adapts to the vagaries of fate.

One should also pause to consider the logic of the concept of adaptation, which is equally popular among biogeneticists and sociogeneticists. The point of the matter is that in using the concept of adaptation there is in effect no longer a need for examining and analyzing phenomena of human activity, since in accordance with the logic of adaptation the latter may be reduced to a purely reflex balance with the environment independent of the way in which it is conceived, i.e., to purely animal activity. For example, Alexei Severtsov and Vladimir Vagner, two Soviet biologists, in studying the process of evolution of the psyche of animals analysed the transformation of psychological processes as a form of adaptation to the environment through changes in behaviour "without changes in organization".

In noting the development, together with hereditary adaptation, of individual changes in behaviour among animals, Severtsov and subsequently Vagner believed that the specific characteristic of the human psyche lay in a combining of adaptive acts with the development of the organism's flexibility as a result of which man perfected his behaviour within an artificially created environment of culture and civilization. Man is thus viewed as the culmination of the development of the ability of living beings to adapt.

When associated with the tradition of an anatomical and functional analysis of psychological development, the concept of adaptation creates the illusion of a maturing of psychological age-related qualities of the individual in the context of a "biogenetic law" and independently of education and human activity, which are interpreted as merely "external factors".

Let us summarize some major points.

The history of theoretical and experimental studies of the process of the development of the individual's personality, including age-related development, has been marked by a consistent division between external and internal factors, biological and social elements, heredity and environment. In effect this has been a struggle of two points of

view. Sociogeneticists rightly criticized biogeneticists for seeking to reduce all aspects of vital human activities to a manifestation of hereditary elements and for attempting to infer complex social and psychological phenomena from organic changes in the human soma. Biogeneticists in turn criticized sociogeneticists for reducing the process of man's psychological development to "environmental influences" which portrayed man as a "shadow" of a social organism. Clearly both these points of view represent extreme poles. But it does not follow that the truth lies somewhere in between—in recognizing man's biosocial nature. For man's nature is an integral phenomenon.

Karl Marx held the view that man's essence lies "in the ensemble of the social relations".¹ And a combining of arguments deriving from the natural scientific sphere (biology, physiology) and the social and historical sphere results not in "convergence" but in the most prosaic eclectics. In order to avoid the extreme views of biogenetic and sociogenetic explanations of man's development and also their simple mechanical combination, a clarification of theoretical and methodological principles is needed for viewing natural and social aspects of the development of the individual from the position of the Marxist-Leninist proposition concerning man's social essence.

Object-related Activity

What is then the "mechanism" underlying personality development? Or more precisely what are the moving forces of man's individual development? What explains a transition from one stage of development to another?

The concept of object-oriented activity that will serve as our basis and which underlines the individual's self-development has been formulated and analyzed in some detail in Soviet psychology. What is its essential meaning as an explanatory principle for the individual's psychological development including its age-related changes?

Soviet psychologists proceed from the Marxist-Leninist proposition that man is formed and develops through activity. Types of activity, of course, are governed by man's

¹ Karl Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach", in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1976, p. 4.

species-related characteristics and are developed in the course of the human race's historical and cultural development. But as facts of man's psychological life they can only be understood in terms of their acquisition by individuals.

Even such characteristics of higher nervous activity that appear to be independent of human will, for example, the psycho-physiological mechanisms of human activity and the sphere of unconscious psychological phenomena, become elements of the personality only after being appropriated by individuals as attributes of their vital activities. As for the so-called "higher psychological functions" (conceptual and image-oriented thinking, ideals, world views, interests, etc.), the fact that they are developed in a social and cultural context is so apparent that the only way in which they may be transformed into the reality of an individual's personal relation to the world and his own being is their acquisition in the course of reproduction-oriented activities—ranging from simple imitation to higher reflective forms of consciousness and creativity. In short, a person's developing activity is the source and ultimate cause of his emergence as a unique and integral human individual. This, then, is the point of view of Soviet psychologists that is based on an activity-oriented approach to understanding the secrets of the human psyche.

The concept of an activity-oriented understanding of personality development, including its age-related changes, was laid in the 1920s and 1930s in the works of Sergei Rubinshtein, Lev Vygotsky, and Alexei Leontiev, three Soviet psychologists. By 1940 Sergei Rubinstein had established and characterized in some detail the basic types of activity, namely play, learning and work, to which more recently researchers have also added social communication. In the individual's ontogenesis one can easily discern the co-existence, mutual interrelation and replacement sequences of these types of activity. In such a context, moreover, a fundamental role was played not so much by the identification of these basic forms of human activity as by their examination (primarily in the works of Alexei Leontiev) as the genetic principle governing the development of human individuality: the course of development of the individual today runs from the games of small children through the learning activities of older children and adolescents and the work activities of adults. The role of social communication is

that of a means for realizing individual types of activity (play, learning, work), but it also serves an autonomous function (so-called "activity-oriented communication" in its various forms) and as the basic channel of individual development at various stages of ontogenesis (for example among infants).

Warning against a purely mechanical and vulgar interpretation of the activity-oriented approach Alexei Leontiev stresses that:

"Overall life or activity, however, does not consist of simple mechanical combinations of individual types of activity. Some types of activity play a leading role and have a greater significance for the individual's further development while others have lesser significance. Some play a dominant role in development while others play a subordinate role. Accordingly one should speak of a dependence of psychological development not on activity in general but on the leading form of activity. One may therefore state that each stage in psychological development is characterized by a specific type of activity which plays a dominant role at the given stage of a child's relation to reality. A shift in the leading type of activity and the leading type of a child's relation to reality is symptomatic of a transition from one stage to the next."¹

These fundamental provisions of activity-oriented psychological theory that were initially formulated only in relation to the development of children should also be extended to personality development in general. This means that the basic principle in considering personality changes at individual stages of life will be an analysis of the leading type of activity constituting a central link and "key" to all kinds of manifestations of developing and mature individuals.

To make an activity-oriented interpretation of personality development with regard to concrete data relating to various age groups two additional concepts are needed, namely, that of a social situation relating to development and that of an individual's new psychological formations.

¹ A. N. Leontiev, *Problemy razvitiia psikhiki* (Problems of Psychological Development), Moscow University Publishers, 1972, p. 505.

In Soviet science both these concepts are associated with the name of Lev Vygotsky and his students (especially Lydia Bozhovich and Daniil Elkonin). In opposing naturalism and a one-sided biological approach in interpreting age-related personality changes and also vulgar sociologizing approaches, Vygotsky formulated the principle of the integral unity of social factors with individual ones. This is the basic meaning behind his concept of social situation of development. He employs this term to refer to the particular combination of internal processes of development and external conditions that are typical for each age-related stage and that also govern changes in psychological development throughout the corresponding age period as well as the qualitatively new psychological formations that emerge towards its end. Accordingly, the concept refers to concrete situations encompassing social, cultural and individual factors within which a shift occurs from one dominant activity to the other.

As for the concept of new psychological formations, it is clarified by the idea of a social situation of personality development: these are psychological qualities emerging at individual stages relating to age categories (within a specific social situation of development) that, from a psychological point of view, may be defined as new needs, motivations, abilities, etc.

Consequently, there exist three major concepts that are required for an activity-oriented explanation of the process of personality development. We have mentioned them here because in the course of subsequent exposition still others will be required that will be clarified as the need arises.

For the present let us raise only one question, namely what are the advantages of an activity-oriented approach over other explanatory systems of man's psychological development?

To be adequately interpreted the subject of psychology, i.e., individual personalities developing through vital activities and perceived in terms of their subjective attributes (needs, subjective images, objectives, motivations, imagination, will, etc.), requires the concept and logic of self-development. Any attempt to assert man's basic self-development activity abstractly (purely externally), when considered more closely and in terms of the concrete "external factors" whose assimilation (or interiorization) is said to re-

veal the contents of each step in the emergence of man's personality, inevitably proves to be one or another type of psychological reductionism ("reducing" what is complex to what is simple). Only man's real object-oriented activity in appropriating socially established modes of action may provide an adequate basis for understanding the self-development of the individual in the context of his vital activities. This is the principal meaning and accordingly the advantage of the activity-oriented approach in describing processes of personality development and of its age-related changes.

In short, in considering the cause of age-related changes in the individual and the basis on which man's development takes place, answers must be sought in changes in the subject's activities that take place as a result of a replacement of social situations in the process of personality development and leading to the appearance of new psychological formations. This triangular set of concepts can explain much (although not everything) concerning personality development. They make it possible, it would appear, to turn to a real periodization of man's development, i.e., to identify dominant forms of activity within man's vital activities, analyze associated changes in social situations of development and provide the characterization of those new psychological formations that develop on such a basis. Yet, reasonable though such a research approach may be, its "output" would be a purely mechanistic scheme of the individual's age-related changes, for the moments at which transformation activities take place represent special developmental points at which, in the words of Vygotsky, there operates "another type of development" that has been described in modern psychology as an "age crisis". Accordingly let us therefore turn first to the characterization of that specific phenomenon.

Age Boundaries

In a letter to his father Karl Marx wrote:

"There are moments in one's life which are like frontier posts marking the completion of a period but at the same time clearly indicating a new direction. At such a moment of transition we

feel compelled to view the past and the present with the eagle eye of thought in order to become conscious of our real position.”¹

In modern psychology these moments in human life have been called age crises in personality development.

Modern Soviet psychology, which has founded its methodology on dialectics, views the existence of age crises as a legitimate and necessary fact. Lev Vygotsky wrote that even if critical ages had not been discovered in a purely empirical manner the corresponding concept should have been introduced into a developmental scheme on the basis of theoretical analysis.

Indeed a dialectical view of development presupposes the introduction of the concept of a dialectical leap, “an overcoming” of the old contents of development on a new loop, a transition, in the words of Hegel, into a new quality. This is a transition into “one’s other state” since one is referring to an integral process of development of personality within which periods of stability (which are called “lithical”) are followed by step-like transitions and changes. To clarify this point let us consider the following image: age-related characteristics that were formed at a preceding stage of development and which are appropriate for their own times must disappear and burn away as the stages in a rocket that have already performed their function—that have already launched the spaceship into orbit. Anticipating our discussion somewhat, it is this that is the basic meaning of age crises.

In short, the existence of specific periods in the development of an individual’s personality—of age crises—is an unquestionable fact that was discovered in a purely empirical manner and, we should add, already some time ago. Hippocrates, a physician in Ancient Greece, wrote about the existence of so-called “climacteric years”, which are in effect “age crises”. But traditionally age crises were perceived as “anomalies” of development, “as growing pains” that were not in any way associated with internal principles governing personality development. Vygotsky was first to undertake an attempt to systematize and interpret theoret-

¹ Karl Marx, “Letter from Marx to His Father”, in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1975, p. 10.

ically moments of crisis in personality development. Accordingly we will present below his basic ideas on this subject.

It is not surprising that crisis periods in personality development were discovered empirically through simple observation, for it is difficult not to notice them. It is literally "before our very eyes" that a charming two-year toddler transforms himself into an ungovernable, obstinate and disobedient three-year-old, while an adolescent, for example, is changed in the course of a very short period of time from a child "gaping" at adults, seeking their approval and copying their behaviour into an individual who defies the "world of adults". Thus, within a relatively short time striking changes in personality occur that are difficult not to notice. A smooth course of development is replaced by sharp crises.

Such crises develop quietly, moreover, and as a rule find observers unprepared, for they are difficult to recognize at their initial stages. They first manifest themselves clearly at the time of their peak state. At such moments children become "unmanageable", occasionally obstinate and do not respond to any pedagogical influences. And while it may be said that in general lithical periods of personality development may be anticipated and possess some common features, age crises are characterized by numerous variants and individual manifestations. Still another important trait of crises concerns the "dominance of negative forms of development", the prevalence of destructive work over creative forms: important new formations originating in the preceding crisis stage are destroyed, and there is a loss of interest in forms of activity that only recently constituted the principal meaning of activities and entirely absorbed the individual's attention.

Historically, as Vygotsky stresses, "in accidental order", first the crisis of seven-year-old children was discovered followed by the crisis of three-year-olds and then that of 13-year-old children. Subsequently the crisis of birth was discovered and finally today's researchers refer to a variety of crises of youth, maturity, and even old age. Thus an age crisis is a certain universal characteristic of man's age-related development that characterizes threshold moments at which, in most cases, there generally occurs a substantial restructuring of the personality. These critical age points,

moreover, are most often discovered empirically and are described on the basis of observations. Table 1 presents one of the variants of a sociological identification of crisis points of man's age-related development. It shows the age-related stages of man's development ranging from infancy to old age on the basis of research carried out in the USSR. The table is shown entirely for illustrative purposes, for it clearly reflects if not all at least many principle points of personality restructuring in connection with certain facts relating to the individual's social existence. In subsequent chapters the specifically psychological meaning of crisis phases will be examined in connection with psychological principles governing the quiet periods of personality development. In this section we will pause to consider the major theoretical aspects of psychological interpretation of crisis phenomena of age-related development.

The identification of critical ages substantially completes and makes more clear the image of age-related changes in personality development. Crises in psychological development constitute a specific watershed between stable age-related phases of personality development, but they also represent the mechanism producing their succession. They express the step-like character of personality development and record the moment of a leap or transition to a new level of psychological development, to a new age. They represent the most intensive accumulations of the vanishing of the old and emergence of a space within which new elements are formed. Vygotsky stressed that in this sense development does not interrupt for a single moment its creative mission or its constructive work, since the destruction of new psychological formations during a crisis period is subject to the law that requires that some personality traits and characteristics be replaced by others that correspond to the new life situation. Negative tendencies of development—destruction—are nothing more but the alternate, shadow side of positive work: these two sides are inherently linked with each other.

Moreover, crises are not only unavoidable and necessary forms of development but, we might say, are also "desirable", for it has been established that if a crisis proceeds without expression, this may produce delays in psychological development and be reflected in the entire further course of personality formation. If at a specific moment in time

Table 1
Critical Age Points (according to T. Yaroshenko, 1977)

Age Points:	Characterization
1 year	Beginning of mastery of speech, walking, admission to nursery school
3 years	Important stage in the child's socialization: transfer from nursery school to kindergarten
6-7 years	Beginning of learning in school environments
12 years	Beginning of adolescent period
14 years	Age of legal responsibility
14-15 years	Completion of 8-year school, admission to Young Communist League
16 years	Acquisition of passport, possibility of beginning to work, increase in legal responsibility
18 years	Right to vote, right to marry, adaptation to post-school life
22 and 23 years	Completion of higher education, beginning of independent activities, marriage
24 and 25 years	Modal age for birth of first child, beginning of professional career
30 years	Essential changes in psychology
35 years	Individual achieves status that makes it possible to judge his career opportunities; age after which changes in a person's orientation and forms of development are unlikely
40 years	Stabilization of professional status
45 years	Completion in most cases of a substantial qualitative change in the sphere of production, limit to size of family, beginning of independence of children
50 years	Major anniversary
55 years	Pension age for women
60 years	Pension age for men
70 years	Average life expectancy today in developed societies

Note: Some specialists have identified still other ages as critical points, namely, 11, 13, 21, 28, 33 years.

(let us say in the third year) a crisis does not take place, this means that psychological development is proceeding too slowly and that the preceding form of activity has not been fully assimilated by the child and accordingly impedes a transition to a new and higher form of activity, as well as the appearance of new psychological formations without which the vital activities of the child at a new stage of his development are either made difficult or else become altogether impossible.

And finally the last point. Age crises, as we have already noted, are inherently associated with periods of quiet personality development within which they mature and often overlap in time. We have already stated that the beginning of a crisis is difficult to establish precisely. In particular this is true because the last phase of quiet development of an age coincides with the pre-crisis phase of the crisis itself, with its beginning, while the beginning of the next quiet period of development merges with the post-critical phase of the crisis. As a rule, one can observe only the central part, the one that is specifically critical. This results in difficulties in the chronological recording of lithical and critical phases of development that often coincide in time (over periods ranging from several months to half a year and even a year). All this should be kept in mind when we turn to a periodization and the concrete psychological study of age-related changes in personality.

Life Periods

Man's life between birth and death is itself a certain wave-like process and, as any living process, is also periodic. The first task the researcher of this developing phenomenon faces is to define the basic periods of that development. In that respect, the major problem of age psychology is a periodization of the ontogenesis of the personality—the defining of real periods of personality development, the establishing of major character traits for each of the periods, and the study of mechanisms of transition from one period to the next.

The problem of periodization is an old one in age-related psychology but it is always topical; and today it contains numerous unanswered questions, diverse points of

view and substantial advances as well as "uncharted areas". To supply the reader with a clear picture of the problem of periodization of an individual's life, we will seek to consider the most fundamental periodizations of human psychological development in order to then show on that basis the principles and structure of the currently existing age periodization.

But, before turning to an analysis of the problem, let us identify the two major problems of modern psychological teachings concerning periodization.

Any periodization is concerned not only with a chronology (the identification of individual stages of development) but also with the establishment of well-founded principles for identifying corresponding stages. Boris Porshnev, a well-known Soviet historian and social psychologist, has noted that periodization is motivated not by a search for a smooth distribution of teaching and research materials but by qualitative shifts in the course of a particular development. The principle of periodization determines what the researcher views as fundamentally important, in identifying individual stages of personality development and the point of view from which all kinds of changes that take place in the course of ontogenesis are considered. Moving along this plane and clarifying the principles governing various periodizations of personality development, one quickly discovers their multiplicity and variety. Accordingly in analyzing this most important question it is necessary to view it critically and to seek within individual approaches a "rational kernel" but without universalizing it (i.e., without transforming individual principles into principles that are expected to define and explain everything). Such is the first difficulty of periodization. Another concerns the "unevenness" of today's periodization. We have in mind the fact that today the periodization of the age development of children is far more detailed and substantiated than in the case of adults. Moreover, a number of highly interesting models of child development are not extended to further stages of personality development (a point that, of course, represents a shortcoming from the point of view of general problems). At the same time, these periodizations are extremely interesting and productive from the point of view of the fundamental principles on which they are based (for example, the periodization of Lev Vy-

gotsky and Daniil Elkonin).

Following these two observations we may turn directly to an exposition of a number of periodizations of human life.

Lev Vygotsky identified three groups of periodizations corresponding to the theoretical foundations on which they are based: (1) periodizations constructed by dividing man's development in terms of stages on the basis of a step-like structuring of other processes that are associated with that development in one way or another; (2) periodizations that are constructed on the basis of one attribute of development playing the role of a conventional criterion; (3) periodizations associated with attempts to establish essential characteristics of human personality development itself.

The first group of periodizations includes the attempts noted earlier to match the individual's ontogeny with man's phylogeny when parallels are drawn between ages in personality development and ages of man's historical development. It has already been noted that such a proposition is generally untenable. On the other hand, the same group also includes periodizations that call for more careful evaluation as they are based on a subdivision of personality development in accordance with significant moments in the socialization of the individual, such as, for example, stages of social education and training associated with specific characteristics of the educational system adopted in a given country. This is illustrated, for example, by the periodization of René Zasso, a French psychologist who views the development of children as influenced by the organizational characteristics of the French and American systems of education and training: six three-year periods, each of which ends at the age of three, six, nine, twelve, fifteen, and eighteen respectively. The merit of this scheme, in our opinion, is that it takes into consideration the fundamental significance of stages of socialization of a child which correspond to basic social and pedagogical institutions (for example, nurseries, kindergartens, elementary schools, etc.). The major shortcoming of Zasso's periodization is that the development of children is made directly dependent on socio-pedagogical doctrines, any changes in which (in one country or another, not to mention different cultures) require a change in the periodization itself. In effect, this periodization basically refers not to psychological but to pedagogic ages.

The second group of periodizations includes schemes of the type that are associated with Sigmund Freud, the famous Austrian psychologist, and also the Soviet psychologist Pavel Blonsky. This group is based on a single attribute and symptom which operates as a conventional criterion for periodization possessing various degrees of simplification. For Freud this attribute as the concept of the individual's sexual development viewed as a gradual change in the relative importance of the major erogenous zones. In accordance with this scheme, he identified the following stages: oral, anal, phallic, latent and genital, corresponding to sexless, neutral, bisexual and sexual childhood and ending with sexual maturity. Subsequent changes in personality in the system of social relations, according to Freud, do not produce changes in the type of personality and, therefore, may be neglected.

Blonsky bases his periodization on the attribute of dentation (the state of one's teeth) and distinguishes the following changes of childhood: toothless, milk teeth and permanent teeth. He complements this with characteristics relating to weight, constitution, environment and behaviour.

In our opinion, these periodizations suffer from a clear naturalism, i.e., a reduction of an individual's psychological development to the maturing of the organism.

Finally, a third group of periodizations, and the one that is most productive, is associated with attempts to find essential characteristics of the age of childhood. Its proponents, moreover, often refer as well to external processes of personality development (such as a system of education and training) as well as attributes of development (viewed as new personality formations), but, unlike Zasso, Freud and Blonsky, they do not universalize them, and do not see them as explanatory principles.

With regard to concepts developed in other countries, let us consider those three which are most fundamental and influential, namely, the periodizations of Erick Erikson and James Birren, American psychologists, and also of Diana Bromley, an English author.

Erikson's periodization¹ is unquestionably, in our opinion, the one that is most impressive and also the most "psychological", as it were. His approach is based on epi-

¹ See: E. H. Erikson, *Identity. Youth and Crisis*, New York, W. W. Norton & Co., 1968.

genetic principle (development on the basis of various new formations) and absolutizes the discreteness of development. In his opinion, in effecting a transition to each new stage of development new formations of the preceding stage do not vanish and are not transformed but are preserved unchanged and included into a new systemic organization of personality and synchronized with newly emerged formations. His fundamental thesis may be formulated as follows: new formations lead to personality development. The scheme of periodization which is thus constructed is very detailed. According to Erikson, the direction of personality development is determined by the idea of an opposition of the individual to increasingly complex social demands that presuppose a continual choice between two mutually opposed attitudes to the world and to one's self. That choice, in Erikson's opinion, is what determines the course of development at a given stage. A transition from one stage to the next is defined exogenously (socially) and the emergence of psychological new formations merely record that transition from a psychological point of view.

Erikson's periodization possesses numerous purely psychological advantages not to mention its very great popularity. His identification and characterization of new formations is especially productive. Let us note that in this respect there is much in common between Erikson and the corresponding characteristics of age-related new formations identified by Soviet psychologists. Attempts to establish the internal contradictions governing the development of personality ("polarities") and also an emphasis not on biological but on social institutions of personality development are quite significant. Nevertheless, one cannot fully accept this scheme since Soviet psychology does not share the idea of an adaptation to a social environment that is in opposition to man, for as was shown earlier, it does not proceed from the idea of a fundamental adaptation as a universal principle governing personality development but from the proposition that individuals acquire universal modes of action. It is this which diametrically opposes us to the system of explanation of psychological development proposed by Erikson.

All other schemes of psychological development elaborated in other countries are significantly less advanced than is Erikson's periodization, both in terms of the extent to

which various ages are encompassed and in terms of a purely psychological orientation. At the same time, the present study refers to still two other schemes, to illustrate the state of genetic studies generally. It should be noted that both these schemes were developed before Erikson and precede his works chronologically. Why do they concern us? The periodization of James Birren (see Table 2) is an interesting attempt to combine metric (duration, since the time of birth) with topological aspects (qualitative characteristics—the unidirectional, unidimensional, and irreversible character of development). We find here in more comprehensive form than in Erikson's work a consideration of the duration of phases of personality development. Let us note Birren's attempt to show a certain governing principle relating to "increasing duration" of phases; while the first phase ("infancy") lasts only two years, the sixth, for example, ("maturity") lasts 30 years, and this may be viewed as a significant empirical observation.¹

Table 2

Duration of Phases of Life Intervals (according to J. Birren, 1964)

Phase	Years
Infancy	2
Preschool Age	2-5
Childhood	5-12
Adolescence	12-17
Early Maturity	17-25
Maturity	20-50
Late Maturity	50-75
Old Age	75-...

Diana Bromley's periodization² is notable for its emphasis on the cycle of gestation, which marks in a certain sense a "record" in encompassing the phases of life (although historically this idea is not new, as is noted in the next chap-

¹ J. E. Birren, *The Psychology of Aging*, New Jersey, Prentice Hall, 1964, p. 5.

² See: D. B. Bromley, *The Psychology of Human Aging*, London, 1966.

ter). Bromley divided ontogenesis into five cycles: I. Gestation (from conception to birth) within which there are four stages: (1) zygote; (2) embryo, (3) foetus, (4) birth; II. Childhood: (1) infancy (0-18 months), (2) preschool age (18 months-5 years), (3) childhood (5-11/13 years); III. Adolescence: (1) puberty (11/13-15 years), (2) late adolescence (15-21), which was marked by a transition from dependence to independence; IV. Adulthood: (1) early adulthood (21-25 years)—this is marked by an inclusion of all types of social activity, family, work, (2) middle adulthood (25-40 years)—this corresponds to an intellectual and professional peak, (3) late adulthood (40-55 years)—departure of children from the family, (4) pre-retirement age (55-65)—peak of social achievements; V. Senescence: (1) retirement (65-70), (2) old age (70-...).

Birren's and Bromley's periodizations have important shortcomings and one could also criticize them in fundamental terms. We will not do this, however, since it is not the purpose of this study to make detailed surveys and comprehensive criticism of periodization systems of man's psychological development. Let us only note that all the periodizations that have been mentioned cannot play for us the role of even an initial scheme because of the fundamental propositions on which they are based (the principle of adaptation to the environment and orientation on empirical facts as a basis for establishing periods of life, etc.).

Soviet psychology considers that the basis of periodization of psychological development in accordance with the understanding of substantive forces of psychological personality development noted earlier is provided by the following criteria: the succession of dominant types of activity, the appearance of qualitative new formations of psychological development and changes in social situations of development.

Historically, the first step in realizing such an approach was taken by Vygotsky, who tackled the problem of periodization of psychological development from a cultural-historical (concrete-historical) approach to age changes in the individual. According to Vygotsky, the periods of man's ontogenetic development are inherently associated with concrete-historical situations of his development (social situations of development). Vygotsky defined development as "a continuous process of self-movement characterized,

above all, by the unceasing emergence and formation of new elements that were not present at earlier stages".¹ Accordingly Vygotsky views as the major criterion for age periodization the appearance of new psychological formations, which he also associates with specific social situations of development that call these formations into existence. In such a context, within Vygotsky's scheme more than in any other there is an emphasis on the significance and chronological position of age development crises. Therefore, as far as child psychology is concerned, his scheme continues to appear quite modern even today (see Table 3).

Table 3

Periodization of Child Development (according to L. Vygotsky, 1972)

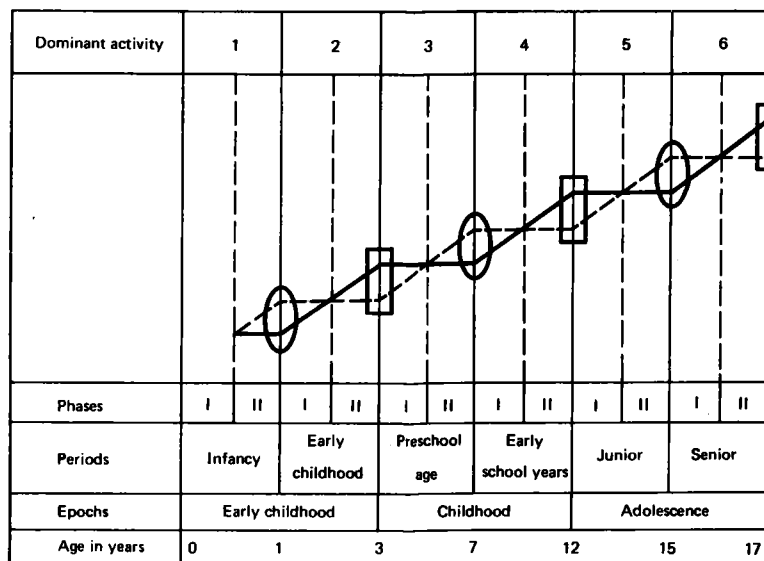
Age	Name of Period or Crisis	Stage of Period and Phase of Crisis
0-2 months	crisis of birth	a) pre-critical b) critical c) post-critical
2 months— 1 year	infancy	1) early infancy 2) late infancy
1 year	crisis of 1-year-olds	a), b), c),
1-3 years	early childhood	
3 years	crisis of 3-year-olds	a), b), c),
3-7 years	pre-school age	1), 2),
7 years	crisis of 7-year-olds	a), b), c),
8-12 years	school age	1), 2),
13 years	crisis of 13 year-olds	a), b), c),
14-17 years	age of puberty	1), 2),
17 years	crisis of 17-year-olds	a), b), c)

¹ L. S. Vygotsky, "Problema vozrastnoi periodizatsii detskogo razvitiia" (The Problem of Age Periodization of Child Development), in *Voprosy Psikhologii* (Problems of Psychology), 1972, No. 2, p. 117.

Yet Vygotsky's relatively complex and in its own way comprehensive periodization possesses its own limitations as well, among which the most important in our opinion is the disregard of fundamental changes in a child's activity at the individual life stages (Vygotsky knew of these crises, of course, since he described them so well in his studies on child psychology) and also a failure to extend that periodization to man's overall ontogenesis: to youth, maturity, and old age. As a result, the periodization is only partial.

Several decades separate the appearance of Vygotsky's periodization from that of Elkonin, his disciple and student, which was published in an article in the journal *Voprosy Psikhologii* (Problems of Psychology). In this article Elkonin developed further Vygotsky's principles and proposed a more detailed psychological scheme of child development based this time entirely on the principle of dominant activity. By that time (the early 1970s), the principle of dominant activity as well as the entire theory of genetically transmitted types of activity had been elaborated in the studies of Alexei Leontiev and his associates. Elkonin's article filled in many missing elements of that theory associated with the absence of a scheme of periodization and at the same time helped provide it with a comprehensive form that was also convenient for practical work. In his own periodization (see Table 4), Elkonin divided childhood into stages which were then subdivided into two periods corresponding to dominant types of activity, developing primarily either the motivation-and-needs sphere or the operational and technical sphere of psychological activity. A transition from one stage to the other appears when disharmony arises between the operational and technical possibilities of a child, on the one hand, and the tasks and motivations that led to their appearance at a preceding stage of development. This in effect became the working scheme of the overwhelming majority of child psychology studies conducted by Soviet psychologists during the past decade, and it is on this basis that many valuable findings were made characterizing child development. Yet, Elkonin's periodization contains the same significant shortcoming as the one that we find in L. Vygotsky's scheme: it is detailed and well-grounded only with regard to the age of childhood.

Table 4
Periodization of Psychological Development in Childhood
(according to D. Elkonin, 1971)



———— Development of motivation and needs sphere

- - - - - Development of operational and technical sphere



Transitions from epoch to epoch



Transitions from period to period

The diagram clearly shows the spiral-like character of child development overcoming the gap between the development of two spheres, that of motivation-and-needs on the one hand and the operational and technical sphere on the other. The crises of psychological development according to that scheme refer correspondingly to the ages of 3, 12, and 17 years.

This first chapter concludes our discussion of preliminary general theoretical material. We may now begin analyz-

ing personality development with respect to modern psychology. This was why a brief description was provided of the methodological positions, the general theory of psychological development, and the basic concepts that are needed for analysis, and a periodization scheme. Still, before we turn to facts relating to the present, let us embark on a short journey into the past—a brief excursion into the history of the concept of life stages. Like the words “childhood”, “adolescence”, “youth”, and “old age”, the corresponding phenomena themselves which these words denote are historically conditioned. Unless we relate our concepts to actual history our analysis of the stages of life is automatically in danger of being separated from a cultural and historical context—suspended in mid-air as it were—and this contradicts the methodology of Soviet psychology.

“...Not to forget the underlying historical connection, to examine every question from the standpoint of how the given phenomenon arose in history and what were the principal stages in its development and, from the standpoint of its development, to examine what it has become today.”

Vladimir Lenin

CHAPTER 2

MAN'S STAGES OF LIFE: CULTURE AND HISTORY. THE SOCIO-HISTORICAL APPROACH TO THE CONCEPT OF LIFE STAGES

At the Dawn of Human History

The Mythology of Life Stages

The Philosophy of Life Stages

Magic and Life Stages

The Science of Life Stages

Stages of Life in the Modern World

The Socio-Historical Approach to the Concept of Life Stages

The history of the concept of life stages is still awaiting a detailed description; this remains a task for the future. We have reason to be optimistic of success in as much as there is lively interest concerning questions of the historical development of human life stages, and preliminary studies have been already published.

The history of age groups psychology is undoubtedly a fascinating subject. In one of his works, Alexander Luria, a prominent Soviet psychologist, writes:

"One can only be surprised by the fact that the thought concerning the socio-historical origins of many psychological processes and regarding the fact that the most important manifestations of human consciousness develop under the direct influence of basic forms of practical activity and real forms of culture have long been completely ignored by psychological science."¹

This also applies fully to age-related psychology where the concept of a socio-historical and cultural determination of age-related changes in personality development has emerged relatively recently. For a long time most psychologists studying man's age-related characteristics viewed age as a natural human state depending entirely on the species-determined properties of his organism and his specific psychophysiological characteristics. Such naturalistic concepts concerning man's age-related psychology prevailed until the 1920s when an intense development of ethnographic studies (Lucien Levy-Bruhl, Margaret Mead, Ruth F. Benedict, Franz Boas, Nikolai Miklukho-Makhlai, and many others) began to undermine the naturalistic image of age-related personality changes. The rich ethno-cultural material collected by researchers made it possible to establish important differences between European civilization and so-called "traditional" societies with regard to literally all param-

¹ A. R. Luria, *Ob Istoricheskoy Razvitiy Poznavatelnykh Protsesov* (Concerning the Historical Development of Cognitive Processes), Moscow, Nauka Publishers, 1974, p. 5.

eters of human development: childhood differs as does adolescence and sometimes, as Margaret Mead established for the indigenous people of the Samoa Islands and subsequently for New Guinea, a transition from childhood to adult life is effected without any period of adolescence. What until then had appeared to Europeans to be a "natural" manifestation of a law of nature turned out to be dependent on specific features of the culture within which man developed. The importance of these studies lies in that for the first time they convincingly demonstrate that the duration of any life stage, the character of the transition from childhood to adulthood and the presence or absence of a crisis and conflict in the adolescent stage depend not on strictly natural causes but are determined by concrete social circumstances in the individual's life.

It should be emphasized that in many respects the origins of a concrete-historical approach to human life-stage characteristics may be traced to the views of the founders of Marxism. In *German Ideology* Karl Marx and Frederick Engels criticized Max Stirner, the German young-Hegelian philosopher, for viewing the life of individuals abstractly and neglecting historical ages, nationalities and classes. This in effect led to an "overemphasis" on the dominant consciousness of the class that was closest to him (the bourgeoisie) and the elevation of that consciousness to the rank of a "normal" state of human life. "In order to rise above this local and pedantic narrow-mindedness he has only to confront 'his' youth with the first young clerk he encounters, a young English factory worker or young Yankee, not to mention the young Kirghiz-Kazakhs."¹

In his *Capital*, K. Marx also described how a group in British Parliament representing the interests of the working class sought to raise the age of adulthood to 12 years.

Researchers have turned to a comparative historical analysis of childhood and other life stages. In the course of these studies it was "suddenly discovered", as is often the case in scientific studies when one's point of reference is altered, that a life stage is not something which is constant and absolute but is, essentially, a socio-historical phe-

¹ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "The German Ideology", in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1976, p. 129.

nomenon. In particular it was noted that in many languages age-related concepts initially denoted social position and social status. For example, the ancient Russian word "otrok" (which later came to mean "youngster") had the meaning of "slave", "servant", "worker", "prince's warrior".

In Soviet psychology a socio-historical approach to the understanding of life stages was introduced through the studies of Pavel Blonsky and Lev Vygotsky. In their studies, dating to the 1920s and 1930s, these researchers showed that there exists not simply childhood but a history of the development of childhood, that childhood is not an unchanging phenomenon and that it is different in each stage of the human race's historical development. In laying foundations of a materialistic age-related psychology, Pavel Blonsky and Lev Vygotsky asserted that there exists an inherent linkage between age-related periodization and mechanisms of psychological development of children, on the one hand, and historically changing system of social education and training of new generations, on the other. The two scholars also maintained that childhood, adolescence and the juvenile phase constitute a concrete historically specific phenomenon that is associated with the character and level of development of society as a whole.

These ideas exerted a deep revolutionizing influence on the entire age-related psychology even though today they have expressed themselves most fully in the field of child psychology. It is the history of childhood, "the history of the mental development of the child,"¹ and cross-cultural studies of age-related characteristics of children that have become the testing ground on which the idea of a cultural and historical social determination of age-related personality changes has been tested in psychology. At the same time there is every reason to expect that what is today a norm for child psychology will come to cover the entire spectrum of human life stages, for not only childhood but also periods of youth, maturity and old age evolve historically and manifest themselves differently in the history of culture. In short, there is every reason to believe that what exists is not stages of life but the history of stages of life

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Conspectus of Lassalle's Book *The Philosophy of Heraclitus the Obscure of Ephesus*," *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1976, p. 351.

without which an analysis of man's age-related characteristics can only be a positive description of existing data. It is possible to overcome the boundaries of such a structural description only by considering the factors that produce changes in these data, i.e., by establishing the real historical socio-cultural mechanism governing their emergence and development.

The findings presented in this chapter are only a partial response to such a task. Moreover, an exposition of the issue itself can hardly pretend to be an introduction to the history of life's stages. It is rather a rapid yet necessary sketch of such a history.

What should be shown first of all is that the present state of age-related changes in personality is the result of a prolonged historical and cultural evolution of man's social life and that it is in no sense a final outcome of that development. It is not an ideal but an actual movement. Even today the stages of life continue to change: the nature of childhood is changing as is that of adolescence, and there are deep changes under way in youth, maturity, and old age. In order to peer into the immediate future of these age-related changes and to discover the tendencies that mark their development it is necessary to look back at the entire history of stages of life.

In considering the age problem in primitive societies, it is important to recognize its particular emphasis on a dominant "mythological" consciousness which organizes that specific world and provides a key to its understanding. It is in a similar sense that we will refer to the "philosophical character" of age awareness in Antiquity and to attempts at its "magical" interpretation in Medieval society. Naturally such an emphasis is partly a matter of convention, and any historical period may be viewed simultaneously in a number of aspects (philosophical and ethical, aesthetic and natural scientific, economic and pedagogical, etc.) But we prefer to select the most vivid "colour", the one that plays the greatest role in organizing the world of man's life stages at a given moment and that brings order to the spectrum of age-related changes at a given historical stage. It would seem that in spite of the somewhat conventional nature of such an approach, it does make it possible to achieve in a most economic way a substantial blending of the two basic positions in our research—namely the historic perspective and the comprehensive view.

At the Dawn of Human History

The famous German writer Thomas Mann has compared the human race's past to an "unfathomable well", that is "simply bottomless". A bottom is not reached as one repeatedly advances, instead new "vistas of the past" continue to emerge.

"This is why in effect the beginning of the history of a particular human community, people or family sharing a faith is defined in terms of a conventional point of departure, and even though we fully understand that we will never succeed in measuring the depths of the well our memories stop at such a point of departure and we are satisfied to accept some type of specific national and personal historical boundaries."¹

There have been approximately 1,600 generations since the Homo Sapiens species first appeared, but it is hardly possible to identify the first of these with any degree of precision. In actual fact researchers combine the first several hundred generations under a common name, that of primitive man, and even though in terms of time his history greatly exceeds that of modern man (for it lasted several tens of thousands of years), its legacy to us is limited to a relatively modest collection of facts acquired through the titanic efforts of numerous paleontologists and anthropologists. What can be learned from these findings with regard to our own subject? What changes in age-group boundaries took place in primitive societies? What age characteristics marked primitive man's age groups? We will try to gather the relevant fragments of available information.

One can establish from numerous sources that the average length of life in primitive society fluctuated between 19 and 21 years.² Apparently an individual's entire life cycle at that time was measured in terms of the two or three decades allotted to each generation.

At the dawn of the human race and at its early stages of cultural development the mature man was a central

¹ See Thomas Mann, *Joseph und Seine Brüder*, Band I. Stockholm, Bermann-Fischer Verlag, 1948, pp. 9, 10.

² A. L. Vischer, *Das Alter als Schicksal und Erfüllung*, III Auflage, Basel, 1955; H. Weinert, *Menschen der Vorzeit*, 1930.

figure. He knew the surrounding locality and possessed many years of life experience, he knew when and where fruits would ripen, how to catch fish and how to kill animals. This knowledge made him society's most important integrating link. But as old age approached and his strength failed him, his knowledge and skills became useless. Helpless old men were then abandoned. This is why primitive societies lacked aged persons. Of 20 known representatives of the ancient Paleolithic age (Neanderthals) as well as of 102 representatives of the late Paleolithic age, not a single person was found whose age at the time of death exceeded 60 years; among 65 representatives of the Mesolithic age only one person was found whose age exceeded 60; in the Neolithic age old persons represented only 10% of the total number of dead; the proportion of old persons in the age that followed the great migrations was only slightly greater as indicated by the findings of burial grounds of Frank clans.

The gradual increase in the numbers of old people in primitive societies is largely explained by the gradual withering away of the ancient custom of killing old people for economic reasons. This was often represented as a religious requirement, even though in actual fact it was motivated by an insufficiency of food. This was also the reason for the equally widespread practice of infanticide.

Like aged persons children found themselves at the periphery of social life. But in order to occupy his place in life a child first had to survive, and this was extremely difficult. Researchers consider that during the first period of man's existence on earth infant mortality exceeded 50%. But even if a child did survive during the first and most difficult year of life his chances to survive further were minimal. Children perished from diseases which primitive man was helpless to combat. Food was in short supply and there was almost no parental care. In addition, as was already noted, the custom of infanticide existed that continued until the discovery of agriculture. Infanticide was practiced on a truly appalling scale (15% to 50%). According to data collected by missionaries, two-thirds of newly-born children on Tahiti were strangled or killed with the help of a sharp bamboo stick.

In accordance with primitive customs, two categories of children were killed first: those who were weak and who developed poorly (especially girls) and children that were

third, fourth, etc., in a family.

Together with the custom of infanticide newly-born children were also sometimes simply abandoned to their fate. This practice continued to exist for a relatively long time and was tolerated by authorities even following the appearance of developed states (the Ancient East, Egypt). An opinion is held that the "legalization" of the custom of abandoning children was designed to reduce the number of children subjected to infanticide. Even in Ancient Greece parents were allowed to abandon newly-born children. In fact, this custom was widespread in practically all major civilizations of Antiquity. At the same time, abortion was commonly practiced through the use of either mechanical or medical means.

The fate of small girls was especially tragic. While both boys and girls were ritually killed if they possessed some physical defect, if their mother died or if they were born in an "unlucky day", girls were first to be killed for economic reasons—a shortage of food.

Once man had mastered the use of fire the position of aged persons and children improved as the first social division of labour (based on age and sex) appeared. It was then the role of men to provide food while women, together with children and old people were to care for the fire.

In short, in primitive societies the leading role was played by mature adults. Man's entire existence was in effect an effort to achieve maturity after which he vanished from this world after a brief flash without reaching old age and after leaving descendants whose chances of survival were low. Nevertheless, the human race did manage to reproduce itself under these difficult conditions and survived for the future. This is also the time when the first concepts concerning man's life stages begin to develop. They were initially embedded in man's everyday practical activities.

The Mythology of Life Stages

Ancient man's concepts of time, which were reflected in his understanding of the stages of life, differed substantially from those of modern man. They were basically characterized by a somewhat paradoxical approach which we at present would describe as a "nontemporal" or "quasi-tem-

poral" view of time.¹ Under certain circumstances archaic forms of consciousness would perceive an event that occurred in the past and an event occurring in the present as phenomena of the same category taking place within a single time duration. Gerald Whitrow writes, "We are, therefore, presented with the paradoxical situation that in his first conscious awareness of time man instinctively sought to transcend, or abolish time."²

Igor Kon, a Soviet researcher, describes this characteristic of the archaic mind as "the diffuseness of mythological consciousness", that makes it impossible for a person to separate his own "self" from his countless ancestors. In *Joseph and His Brothers* Thomas Mann conveys this trait of ancient consciousness in a very subtle way. The old slave Eliezer describes in minute detail, as if it were an event in his own life, the story of how Yitz'hak asked for Rebecca's hand. In actual fact, the event referred to one of his ancestors who performed the very same functions in the household.

"Joseph listened with a pleasure undiminished by any surprise at the grammatical form of Eliezer's narration, not in the least disturbed by the fact that the old man's 'eye' did not possess sufficiently distinct boundaries but was open from the rear, as it were, merged with the past, lying beyond the limits of his individuality and absorbed emotional experiences that should have been recalled and recreated, in the form of the third person rather than the first if viewed in the light of day."³

The mythological perception of the world is expressed not only in narratives concerning the deeds of gods and heroes, behind which is hidden an actual perception of a world governed by the will of gods and spirits, but also in actions and rituals, masks, dances, tattoos, initiations, etc. Everything that "happened" to mythological personages acquired the character of a paradigm for ancient man, becoming a precedent and model to follow. Myths assert a

¹ R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1946, p. 15.

² G. J. Whitrow, *The Natural Philosophy of Time*, London, Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd., 1961, p. 55.

³ Thomas Mann, *Op. cit.*

specific system of values adopted in primitive societies and support and sanction specific behavioural norms. They constitute a certain "language" of the society through which relations in primitive communities are governed. In such societies all concepts of human age had a ritual character, being a set of customs founded in myth. Here, age categories, too, played the role of a "language" that made it possible to preserve the society's traditions.

Modern man finds such a concept of time disorderly and chaotic. Yet it has its own harmony and its own logic and aesthetics. While ancient man (like modern man in a certain sense) lived simultaneously in several time dimensions (sacred time, the time of festivities, the time of sacrifices, the time for reproducing a myth, associated with a return of "primeval" time, and finally the time of one's own life recorded in individual experience), the general flow of that varied time was subjected to a specific governing principle and could be described as a prevalence of the idea of reversibility (cyclical time) over irreversibility (linear time). This is characteristic of practically all ancient civilizations and also of certain contemporary traditional cultures that have retained attributes of archaic formations.

Aron Gurevich, a Soviet researcher who has studied this specific problem notes that the systems of values underlying ancient cultures were based on the idea of an eternally continuing present inherently associated with a past. The traditional perception of time in ancient China is a cyclical succession of eras, dynasties and reigns possessing a liturgical order and subordinated to a strict rhythm, such as, for example, that of the East's 60-year cyclical calendar.¹ A symbol expressing the ancient Indian conception of time was that of the wheel of cosmic order which moves eternally, continually renewing the cycle of birth and death. We find similar conceptions among the ancient Egyptians.²

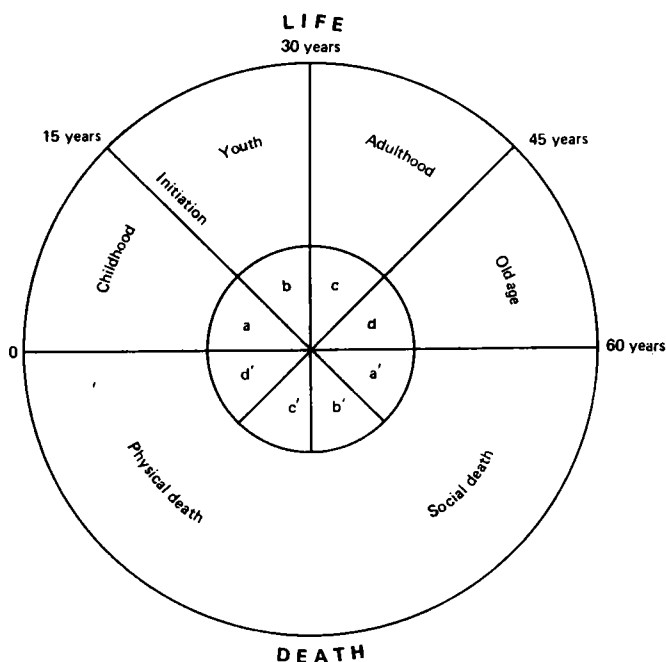
Colin M. Turnbull, a well-known American ethnographer who has studied the origins of African peoples, including their age-related conceptions in ancient times, describes an age-related cyclical system that may serve as an illustration of the whole concept (see Table 5). It may be

¹ M. Granet, *La pensée chinoise*, Paris, 1934, pp. 86, 90, 97, 103.

² H. Frankfort, *The Birth of Civilization in the Near East*, London, 1951, p. 20.

seen from the table that at the age of 15 each group of peers undergoes a ritual of initiation that is widely practiced by various peoples and in different cultures. This ritual symbolizes the end of childhood and the beginning of adult life and is accompanied by numerous trying challenges. Following initiation the group is given a name and it is considered to be "born" (this is the so-called "concept of re-birth"). It is maintained for 15 more years; at that time the group's members transfer into a new age category, preserving the unity of the age group throughout its entire existence. Men in the older age group, if they live to be 60,

Table 5
Cyclical Age System¹



¹ Colin M. Turnbull, *Man in Africa*, Garden City, New York, Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1976, p. 51.

note with satisfaction that children are being born who at the age of 15 will be initiated into the "shadow set" that will bear the same name as the group of persons approaching death—real (physical) or social. In this way a linkage between generations (groups) is preserved, each having their own character and reborn under the same name every 60 years. Time, as we see, then moves in a circle.

It should be noted that such a system of age groups is more than a convenient method for establishing an age-related division of labour: it creates through solemn and periodic initiation rituals strong spiritual ties that link large groups of persons to each other in relation to a common task, produce specific feelings of "loyalty", provide a basis for the distribution of power, encourages young persons to act collectively in protecting land, cattle, crops, and distributes "social roles" in terms of ages, i.e., it ultimately creates a spiritual community of people.¹

But the prevalence of cyclical age systems in ancient societies did not preclude the simultaneous appearance of initial concepts of linear age systems (irreversible time). We find this, for example, in one of the ancient Chinese classifications of life stages (see Table 6). One is struck by the absence of a common basis for specifying ages and by the metaphysical and even metaphoric character of the names of individual stages (e.g. "knowledge of one's own errors"). The absence of a distinct stage for childhood is also characteristic. It is included directly in the age of youth.

Table 6

*Ancient Chinese Classification of Life Stages*²

	Years
Youth	until 20
Age of marriage	until 30
Age of completion of social obligations	until 40
Cognition of one's own errors	until 50
Last period of creative life	until 60
Desired age	until 70
Old age	over 70

¹ See Colin M. Turnbull, *Man in Africa*, Garden City, New York, Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1976, pp. 51-57.

² E. Rosset, *Proces starzenia sie ludności. Studium demograficzne*, Warszawa, 1959, p. 108.

Colin M. Turnbull considers a far more detailed variant of the linear age system in the case of an African tribe that has preserved its primitive customs. Each age group is divided into several subgroups with a corresponding age of initiation for boys. When at the first initiation admission to the group is opened, all other groups are moved forward by one level. Sometimes the group remains "open" for as long as four years. Subsequently it is closed for the period of time during which representatives of that age level remain alive and no one else is admitted. At the initial level each subgroup preserves its individuality and may possess its own district for its activities. Upon passage from youth to an adult state, subgroups vanish and the entire group acquires a single form and preserves it until the end of its members' lives. Following the death of the last member of the group, its name and distinguishing traits vanish forever.

The fact that cyclical and linear age systems coexisted in ancient consciousness is well documented by still another variant also borrowed from the studies of Colin M. Turnbull. This is the so-called step-like age system which contains much of both the cyclical and the linear conceptions of time.

We have considered the characteristics of cyclical, linear, and step-like age systems because in a transformed form the central idea (cyclical character, linear character, step-like character) is present in one way or another in all historically known age systems. It may also be seen in modern age systems which are far more complex and detailed. In the systems that have been described—which constitute simple but sufficiently representative models—we find an outline of many later relations characterizing age groups. In particular we see in ancient initiations the prototype of many modern rituals for socializing new generations that symbolize the young peoples' social maturity (for example, receiving one's passport, admission to young workers or student groups, etc.). Cyclical age systems place much emphasis on transmitting elements from one generation to the next (this may take the form of accepting a common name, for the number of names was generally limited; certain age groups, for example, those entering into life, inherit the name of an age group of aged persons, a group that is passing from the scene, but for whom the new generation represents its visible continuation); today as well

the idea of transmitting legacies from one generation to the next in the professional, spiritual and other spheres, is viewed as a relevant practice. In ancient age systems we also find the beginnings of conflicts between generations—particularly succeeding generations, i.e. fathers and sons. For example, when the time arrived for fathers who were young warriors, to yield their place to their children—the next age group who had passed through initiation thus signaling the transition of fathers to the category of aged persons—they resisted this in all possible ways, still feeling themselves sufficiently energetic and full of strength and not at all disposed to yield their place, their central position in social life.

One should not, however, be misled by these common elements of ancient and modern conceptions, for the system of age conceptions of ancient man is relatively specific and is entirely subordinated to a common foundation—that of mythological consciousness. The Ancients had already noted the socially significant character of age-related stages in human life and developed their own specific form for understanding the stages of life on the basis of an integral image of the world embodied into myth. This served as a model for imitation and offered a method for reproducing social life through its specific rhythms. In ancient times people understood that a child entering into life did not possess any programme of life activities, was not adapted to life and as a result found himself in a border-line situation (between life and death) in his initial years, for natural selection still operated and it was the strong who survived while the weak and the “unneeded” were filtered out. The position of a child was governed entirely by the life of the community and its needs, and the child was an element in a social organism. It was included into that organism first as a part of a woman’s mask, for women were assigned a specific set of rituals designed to provide for the care and upbringing of children. Next the child was associated with a specific age group within which a particular type of training and education took place, and afterwards he was expected to pass through the ritual of initiation in order to gain the right to acquire a clan name (without which he would remain a child during his entire life), etc. In this way, all the age-related stages of life of primitive man were woven into a ritual to which they were subjected. Rituals, in turn, were defined by myths, and this explains the mythological

character of the age consciousness of individuals in ancient times.

Still another very important characteristic of mythological consciousness should be mentioned.

Archaic (mythological) conceptions of human life (in particular of its duration) possessed a particular quality that may very well be described as fantastic. According to Homer, Nestor lived "three human life spans" while Dando, the Illyrian, and one of the kings of Lakma were said to have reached the age of 500 and even 600 years. This could be interpreted as an epic hyperbole and yet...

Igor Klochkov, a Soviet researcher, notes that the "Sumerian Roll of Kings" strikes one with its truly "fantastic durations of individual reigns" of "antediluvian" and the first "post-diluvian" kings. One also observes a specific tendency: the earlier in historical times the events in question took place, the more incredible the durations of human life to which they referred.

It was only at the beginning of the eighth "post-diluvian" dynasty that reasonably credible human life span began to appear.¹

Klochkov observes that the duration of nearly all reigns of Sumerian kings are divisible by 360 (according to Mesopotamia's ancient calendar there were 360 days in a year); it thus appears that "a day is equal to a year" and to obtain the actual durations of corresponding reigns one must divide by 360, a procedure which yields historically plausible results.² It is possible that Mesopotamia's ancient scholars employed such "time coefficients" to encode the degree of sacredness of particular dynasties. In any event, these numbers possess a clearly pronounced symbolic character (a deliberate exaggeration is intended to increase the significance and the sacred character of the cult of kings by transforming the duration of their reigns into a symbol of royal power).

We find similar fantastic symbolic references to the life span of individuals in other historical sources as well. For example, the Old Testament's patriarchs are described as

¹ I. S. Klochkov, *Dukhovnaya Kultura Vavilonii* (The Spiritual Culture of Babylonia), Moscow, Nauka Publishers, 1983, p. 23. Also P. Vidal-Naguet, "Temps des dieux et temps des hommes," in: *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, No. 157, 1960, pp. 55-80.

² I. S. Klochkov, *Op. cit.*, p. 23.

having an exceptionally long life: Adam lived 930 years, Noah—950. As in the “Sumerian Roll of Kings”, post-diluvian patriarchs did not live as long as their predecessors: Abraham died at the age of “only” 175 years, while Isaac lived slightly longer—180 years. The Bible also states that before the flood the average human life-span was 120 years and “giants then lived on earth”.

For us this is an important evidence but not in the sense of historical information, for there is nothing in it that may be called “scientific data” (no researcher would believe in the possibility of a life-span in the past lasting several centuries). What matters is something else. At a very early stage of social development there emerged a specific phenomenon in social thought, namely, age symbolism. This remained in everyday consciousness throughout history—in Antiquity, Medieval societies and even in our own times.

In summarizing our brief survey of the history of life stages in early periods of social development—primitive societies and early slave-states of the East—one should note their specific feature as compared with later stages, i. e. the direct involvement of concept concerning age-related changes in human development in life activities (ritual). Sergei Averintsev, a Soviet researcher, has drawn attention to this mark of ancient civilizations in contrast to that of ancient Greeks. He has written that the entire thinking of Egyptians, Babylonians, and Judeans, even in its highest achievements, is not a philosophy, because its object is not “being” but life, not essence but existence and because it operates not in categories but in terms of undifferentiated symbols of human self-experience. In contrast, the Greeks extracted from the life stream of phenomena, as it were, their essence (whether this be “water” in the case of Thales, “number” in the case of Pythagoras, the “atom” in the case of Democritus or an “idea” in the case of Plato) and began to intellectually manipulate that “essence” thus laying the foundations of philosophy. The Greeks freed theoretical thinking into an autonomous existence. They were first to transform thinking in the world into thinking about the world. In short, the idea of stages of life was not an object of reflection in antiquity and did not possess its own theoretical analysis. It is from the time of the ancient Greeks that the development of that concept begins.

The Philosophy of Life Stages

In the European tradition the concept of human life stages originates in the Ionian philosophy of the 6th century B.C. The views of ancient Ionians combined mythology and philosophy as well as magic and spontaneous materialism, and also medical knowledge and general knowledge about nature. The significance of the ideas of Ionian thinkers for the development of concepts concerning man's life stages cannot be overestimated—in a transformed form we find them among various philosophers of ancient Greece, in the age of Hellenism, in the dramatic works of the Byzantine Empire, in Virgil's famous *Aeneid*, in Medieval treatises and even in many prejudices contained in modern commonly-held conceptions concerning the stages of life.

Two ideas of ancient Ionian thinkers have proven to be particularly viable and widespread. Above all this refers to the proposition of the fundamental singleness of nature, the unity of natural and supernatural forces which originated in the popular beliefs of pagan times. The Ionians interpreted the world as a single system governed by a single rigorous law (cosmic determinism) that defined everything ranging from the movement of planets and seasonal changes of the vegetative cycles to the fate of individuals. One can therefore understand the striving of Pythagoras to define an analogy between the stages of life and the sequence of seasons. We see this in his classification of life stages, the most ancient classification known to us produced by Ionian thinkers (see Table 7). Pythagoras compared childhood and adolescence ("the period of formation") with spring, youth with summer, etc. The duration of each age, according to Pythagoras, was exactly 20 years. Today the specification of a twenty-year cycle will probably seem to be an entirely arbitrary formalism. But in Pythagoras' time such a "formalism" was an expression of an altogether different idea that had nothing in common with the modern concept of formalism. We have in mind another fundamental postulate of Ionic philosophy of the 6th century B.C. that expresses in a specific way the idea of the universal interconnection of all phenomena, namely, numerical symbolism. For Pythagoras numbers were not only mathematical signs but also an inherent attribute of religion, of a physical description of the world, and of magic rituals. Numbers made it possible for

the ancient Greeks to establish certain correspondences within the singleness of the world. They were viewed not as accidental coincidences or superficial analogies but as essential characteristics of the cosmic order.

This idea was vividly expressed in the classification of life stages provided by Hippocrates. That classification is also ascribed to Solon, the Athenian law-giver (6th century B.C.). In his classification of the stages of life (see Table 8), Hippocrates proceeded from the concept of threshold years ("climacteric") postulated by ancient science, which rested on the idea of numeric symbolism.

According to these concepts each seven years (according to others, every nine years) there takes place a fundamental restructuring of the human organism that is dangerous to the individual's health and life.

Table 7

Classification of Stages of Life According to Pythagoras¹

	Years
1. Period of formation...	0-20 ("spring")
2. Young person	20-40 ("summer")
3. A person in the prime of life	40-60 ("autumn")
4. Old waning person	60-80 ("winter")

Table 8

Classification of Stages of Life According to Hippocrates²

Period	Years
First	0- 7
Second	7-14
Third	14-21
Fourth	21-28
Fifth	28-35
Sixth	35-42
Seventh	42-49
Eighth	49-56
Ninth	56-63
Tenth	63-70

¹ E. Rosset, *Proces starzenia sie ludności. Studium demograficzne*. Warszawa, 1959, p. 109.

² Ibid., p. 110.

The Ancients feared the ages of seven, fourteen, twenty-one, ... sixty-three, seventy, seventy-seven (or the ages of nine, eighteen, twenty-seven, ... sixty-three, seventy-two, eighty-one). Naturally the age of sixty-three instilled special fear, for at that point both cycles coincided. It may be that Plato's opinion concerning the age of eighty-one as the ultimate in human life was associated with these superstitions. According to Edward Rosset, a Polish demographer, the age of seventy-seven ("2 scythes" or "2 hatchets" that sever human life) produced a mystical terror among many Poles. Hippocrates, in full conformity with these concepts, divided man's life into ten periods of seven years each, and it could be said that his seemingly "simple" classification has exerted an enormous influence on subsequent thinkers. It was shared by Pliny the Younger, the Roman statesman and writer, by Macrobius, the Roman grammarian and erudite, by ibn Rushd (Averroës), the Arab philosopher and physician from Cordoba. We even find parallels to this idea, which is deeply pagan in its origins, in the Bible: Adam, according to the Holy Scripture, died at the age of 931 (i.e., 7 times 133). In later times, in the 17th century, attempts were made to explain the seven-year cycle in terms of the influence of Saturn on our earthly life. It was only at the end of that century that one Polish priest with the help of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, the outstanding German philosopher and mathematician, succeeded, with the assistance of the London Royal Society and of Edmund Halley, the prominent English astronomer and mathematician, in establishing that there were no grounds for the theory of "threshold years" and their alleged inimical influence on human life.¹

It is important to note that the world was perceived and experienced by ancient Greeks not in terms of categories of change and development but as being in a static state or else moving in a great circle. Events taking place in the world were not unique. The Greeks believed that there existed individuals and phenomena in the past which would return at the end of say the Pythagorean or "long year" era. Let us note the closeness bordering on direct borrowing between many concepts of ancient Greeks concerning cosmic and

¹ E. Rosset, *Trwanie życie ludzkiego*, Wrocław, Warszawa, Kraków, Gdansk, 1979.

individual time and the views of the peoples of the Ancient East mentioned earlier. In a transformed form we can find here both the idea of cyclical time (for the Greeks, vector or linear time played a secondary role) and the concept of rebirth, as well as elements of Hippocrates' linear age-related changes in life. At the same time, elements of cultural legacy are married here with highly original ancient Greek mythology, underlain by the so-called "astronomic nature" of ancient consciousness. Ancient Greeks observed a perfect harmonious cosmos— "a plastically molded whole, as if it were a certain general figure or statue, or even a highly tuned instrument emitting specific types of sounds."¹ Alexei Losev, a Soviet researcher, refers to a type of "sculptural style of history", noting that for ancient Greeks the cosmos was

"a sensory-material and living cosmos representing the eternal circulation of matter, at times emerging from undifferentiated chaos and striking in its harmony, symmetry, rhythmic structure, and serene sublimity, and at other times moving towards its ruin disrupting its own order and again transforming itself into chaos."²

We have considered primarily the philosophical and theoretical views of ancient Greeks concerning life stages and have not mentioned the specific organization of age groups that they produced.

For ancient Greeks age was no longer an element of ritual, and age and sex divisions of labour were recorded without relying on mythological means. Myth continued to assert its rights, but it was taken outside the parameter of life activities as it were—it was literally taken to the theatrical stage (Aeschylus, Euripides, Sophocles)—as the lives of gods and heroes were now viewed from the outside. In analyzing the stages of life, the ancient Greeks did not blindly follow the mythological model but recreated it in their thoughts in harmony with life's logic. Emphasis was shifted increasingly from the sphere of mythology to that of the philosophy of life.

How would one then describe that way of life in terms of its stages?

¹ A. F. Losev, *Istoria antichnoi estetiki* (The History of Ancient Aesthetics), Moscow, Iskusstvo Publishers, 1963, p. 50.

² *Ibid.*

First of all, let us note that as in the case of primitive societies, in ancient Greece as well a central role in social life was played by mature individuals or, as it was said, by man at the time of his "acme"; the position of children was not so deplorable as in primitive societies but still rather difficult. It is known that in ancient Sparta the primitive custom of destroying weak and poorly developed children continued to be practiced. Sparta was primarily a military power and nearly everything was subordinated to sustaining and further developing its military might that so strongly depended on the healthy male body. All men between the ages of 6 and 30 were rigorously organized and controlled by members of a council of elders. Between the ages of 6 and 18, young people were educated and prepared for the hardships of military service, while between the ages of 18 and 30 they served in military units. Moreover, much of the time young Spartans lived separately from their families under the leadership of special tutors. After the age of 30, while continuing his military service, a Spartan received full civic rights and the possibility of living at home. After the age of 60 he became a member of the oldest age group from which the members of the council of elders were chosen.

In neighbouring Athens, life was not so regimented and only one age group, the Ephebes (18 to 20 years) was entirely engaged in military training.

Particular note should be made of changes in the position of the elderly, for even though they did not play a central role in ancient Greece, they were not placed at the periphery of social life. The high respect of ancient Greeks for the wisdom that was associated with old age transformed old persons from weak members of society unsuited for active social life (as they were regarded in primitive societies) into important figures, namely, elders whose functions included governing the country and overseeing the upbringing of the younger generation. The appearance of very aged persons in ancient Greece is associated with this new approach to the elderly.

Today we know mostly about those very aged persons from ancient Greece who became famous in some sphere of social activity. In particular, the poet Simonides lived to be 90, Stesichorus—85; the philosopher Democritus—104; the Stoic philosophers Zeno and Cleanthes 98 and 99 years respectively.

In Rome the age of adolescence was considered to last from 14 to 17 years at which time a man's toga was received; youth lasted until 46 years (Roman citizens reaching the age of 46 were dismissed from military service and were admitted to the senior section of their centuria); after the age of 46 the senior age began; and at the age of 60, according to the views of the Romans, old age began.

The age of majority among Romans began when, following a decision of his family council, a young individual removed his child's clothing and donned a man's toga. Majority age was viewed as sexual maturity, which in ancient times was considered evidence of the young person's suitability for military service. In Imperial Rome, the age of majority for men ranged from 14 to 17 years. With regard to women, according to Roman jurists, the age of majority occurred earlier, at approximately 12 years. Actually this was of no practical significance since in Rome women were under the protection of their fathers, husbands, and close relatives throughout their entire lives.

In analyzing the specific characteristics of age structure in ancient Rome, Igor Kon notes that:

"In the Roman Republic the basic mechanism for rearing children, at any rate among the upper strata of society, was the family. At first the child was brought up by the mother, then the father, often with the help of special teachers from among slaves. Later, when the adolescent began to participate in social life, he was usually guided by a personal friend or a family patron. The Roman ritual of initiation—the presentation of man's clothing (toga virilis)—also was largely a family affair. Such a system contributed to an instilling of individualism and oriented the young person above all toward his own family."¹

Yet it was also in ancient Rome that, as never before, age-related concepts displayed a clear tendency towards representing a person's social relations outside the sphere of purely family relations. It is not accidental that they were a special subject of Roman law. In their social embodiment—as stages of social life—they were viewed as age-relat-

¹ I. S. Kon, *Sotsiologia Lichnosti* (The Sociology of Personality), Moscow, Politizdat Publishers, 1967, p. 113.

ed categories in the works of Roman thinkers. In particular, the Latin word "juvenis" (juvenile person) is employed by Tacitus in a variety of meanings, ranging from a 14-year adolescent to a young person 18 years old and an adult man 30 years old and even a 36-year-old consulary.¹ The main element in the semantics of the word "juvenis" in Tacitus is a concept of man standing at the threshold of social activity yet still not possessing the full power, rights and obligations of an independent citizen. This principal meaning of the word is made apparent in such contexts as the following: "... having become juveniles that are about to be admitted to the Forum," and "a juvenile (juvenis) is a person who is preparing to make speeches at the Forum, to become an orator".

Another prominent representative of his age, the Roman jurist Ulpianus, prepared the first table of life expectancy of its kind that subsequently became one of the most important methods of demographic studies and represents an interesting monument of the culture of antiquity (Table 9).

Table 9
Further Expectation of Life
(according to Ulpianus, 3rd century B.C.)²

Age	Further Expectation of Life
0-20	30
20-25	27
25-30	25
30-35	22
35-40	20
40-41	19
41-42	18
42-43	17
43-44	16
44-45	15

¹ G. S. Knabe, *Kornelii Tatsit. Vremia, Zhizn, Knigi*, (Cornelius Tacitus. Time. Life. Works.), Moscow, Nauka Publishers, 1981, p. 62.

² L. Dublin, A. Lotka, M. Spiegelman, *Length of Life. A Study of the Life Table* (revised edition), New York, 1949, pp. 30-31.

Table 9

(continued)

Age	Further Expectation of Life
45-46	14
46-47	13
47-48	12
48-49	11
49-50	10
50-55	9
55-60	7
60 and above	5

The Table is interesting as an attempt to approach the age dynamics of human life from a scientific position. From it we can infer that the age of 65 was viewed in Ancient Rome as a fully normal life span. It should be added that an elderly person generally became a relatively prominent figure. This can be seen, for example, from the fact that the highest state institution was called the "Senate" (from the word "senex"—old person).

At the same time, old age was an object of philosophical speculation among Romans. In particular one should note the treatise *On Old Age* by Cicero. It exerted a substantial influence on the subsequent course of the study of old age. Cicero's tenet that *senectus ipse est morbus* (old age is an illness) has lasted until our own times and in many respects has played a central role in the interpretation of that stage of life in Medieval society, the Renaissance and even modern times. On the basis of Cicero's proposal, Claudius Galen, the Roman physician and naturalist (approximately 130-200 A.D) whose works in medicine were unchallenged until the Renaissance and whose approach may be described as one of "natural philosophy", offered much useful information concerning old age and came up with certain prophylactic measures namely, exercise, massage, activity, reduced diet, inadvisability of blood-letting, etc. In short, already in Ancient Rome old age had become the object of a detailed and comprehensive reflection and analysis.

In summarizing the interpretation of stages of life in Antiquity, let us note its main characteristics. The ancient

Greeks made concepts concerning life stages an object of theoretical analysis, based on the idea of cosmic determinism and the fundamental integral unity of nature; and they developed further and perfected age-related symbolism. The Romans made age concepts the object of jurisprudence and established an inherent connection between age categories and processes of social life. With regard to the real system of age-related divisions in society, one may note changes in the role of the elderly (while retaining the dominant position of "mature individuals") who came to be particularly respected (for their wisdom). One should also note that just as the age of Antiquity constitutes a relatively closed and integral fragment of human history, so its development of concepts concerning the stages of life represent a relatively closed and unique aspect of the world view of the ancient Greeks and Romans.

In effect a unique, enormous effort was made by men at that time to achieve an integral conception of life and its component stages (life stages) with the help of philosophical analysis. This defined a central path in the development of social consciousness from mythology through philosophy and to the spectrum of scientific and humanistic views of our own times. The Ancient Greeks and Romans were first to see many of the aspects of life stages (medical, natural scientific, legal, economic, ethical, aesthetic, etc.). Still, the most characteristic feature of their outlook was its philosophical nature. Perhaps never since that time in the history of society, no matter what heights philosophy was able to reach in the course of its development, was it so instrumental in understanding the stages of life.

Next we shall consider Medieval society.

Magic and Life Stages

Philippe Aries, a French historian, notes that the concepts of "life stages" played an important role in the pseudo-scientific treatises of Medieval society. The writers used terms that seem purely verbal: childhood (*enfance*), adolescence (*puérilité*), the juvenile age (*adolescence*), youth (*jeunesse*), old age (*vieillesse*) and senility (*sénilité*). Yet each of these words is intended to refer to a specific

period of life.¹ For individuals living in a Medieval society the concept of life stages played the role of "scientific concepts" and, moreover, were no less significant than the concepts of "weight", "measure", etc. The point is that the concept of "age", "stages of life" and "aging" represented for Medieval thinkers an essential category in the perception of the world originating from a system of physical description and explanation developed in the Ionian philosophy of the 6th century B.C. and acquired by Medieval compilers from Byzantine sources. We have already noted earlier that this system of explanation was based on the idea of a fundamental integral unity of the world—both natural and supernatural. In such a concept one of the indicators of this interrelatedness and integral unity was the coincidence of numbers and their symbolism. The stages of life were interpreted as one of the indicators of these mysterious relations between man and the world. Moreover, Medieval scholars clearly abused astral analogies and for that reason their image of man's relation to the world appeared at first glance to be as superficial as astrological horoscopes, being closely linked with the "seven planets" and signs of the Zodiac. Yet such an interpretation was by no means an example of charlatanism but a purely logical continuation of the idea of cosmic determinism. It is important here to understand the specific characteristics of the perception of the world and the style of thinking of Medieval man and his specific feeling of life. In very general terms this may be defined as resignation to a predestined fate, as is expressed in the well-known French saying "c'est la vie" (such is life). For Medieval man life was a necessary cyclical succession of life stages, sometimes joyful and sometimes sad, determined not so much by each person's individual experience as by the general order and essence of things, for only a very few persons were sufficiently fortunate to live a full life. It was a time of high mortality² that is attributed today, incidentally, to a decline in medical arts.³

Moreover, the theme of life stages was exceptionally widespread in popular art in Medieval society and subse-

¹ P. Aries, *L'enfant et la vie familiale sous l'ancien régime*, Paris, Editions Du Seuil, 1973, p. 6.

² P. Aries, *Op. cit.*, p. 11.

³ See: P. Herre, *Schöpferisches Alter, II Auflage*, Leipzig, 1943, pp. 18-19.

quently in the work of such professional artists as Titian and Van Dyck. It is interesting to note that in paintings of early Medieval times concerned with "stages of life," children were represented as diminutive adults. They could be recognized by certain symbolic attributes rather than as an age type. Similarly, representatives of other age groups as well could be recognized primarily through certain aspects of their clothing as well as objects in their environment (a scholar with a book, death with a scythe standing next to an old man, etc.).

It is somewhat surprising that in spite of such close attention to life stages they were often confused: no difference was made between adolescence and juvenility, and both these periods were easily included in childhood. This is illustrated by the example of Medieval schools and universities where age-oriented principles were not followed: students of different ages could be found in a single class. One is also struck by Medieval society's absolute indifference towards biological factors and in particular towards the beginning of sexual maturity, which no one associated with a termination of childhood. Childhood was closely associated with the idea of dependence and did not end until dependence on a senior was also ended. This is why a man of almost any age could be called a "boy" (valet, garçon). In short, emphasis was placed on social status and one could refer to age self-awareness in our own meaning of that word in the conventional sense.

Given such a view of the world one cannot speak of any rigorous age structure in society. In referring to Medieval Europe's village communities, it makes no sense to distinguish between "childhood" and "youth", for example, for they were fused in an integral communal consciousness that deprived man of any individuality including that of age. Stages of life existed as a factor in sexual and age divisions of labour. In the craft guilds of Medieval cities, only the age when a child could become an "apprentice" was important or the time when he reached the opposite pole of his "career", that is, became an elder. While age differentiation was more detailed in such cases, it was also not essential. In short, Byzantium's and Medieval Europe's scholars gave names to segments of life, many of which did not in effect exist at the time for most of the population. Childhood as well as adolescence and youth, and for that matter

old age as well came to be distinguished at later historical stages of social development.

In considering Medieval society one should note that strange as it may seem today, many people at that time, even such outstanding thinkers as St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Augustine, believed in demons. It is not especially surprising then that common people sincerely believed that the fires of the Inquisition were burning the most real witches. It is evident, in short, that Medieval times were strongly influenced by a mystical perception of the world that also extended to the subject of man's life stages, including such well-known questions as the relation of age to youth, attempts to return one's youth and to prolong life. We will therefore consider this separately.

In fairness it must be said that it was by no means in Medieval times alone that attempts were made to link the stages of life with the operation of magical forces. Man had engaged in trying to magically influence age since ancient times. And in our own enlightened age as well there is interest in magic; now and then we hear that still another "medium" claims to have unlocked the secrets of longevity and immortality. Since the beginning of time man has dreamed not only of longevity and immortality. For instance, it was not the prolongation of life that was sought by the legendary Faust—he thirsted for the prolongation of youth. From ancient Greek mythology we know the figure of the unfortunate Tithonus, who at the request of Eos, the goddess of dawn, was granted immortality, but not eternal youth. Similarly, Jonathan Swift described Laputa's immortal inhabitants; whoever was born with the sign of immortality on his forehead was doomed to eternal senility.

The history of the human race offers many examples of attempts to find the "elixir of life" or, more precisely, the "elixir of eternal youth", a deliverance from the helplessness, illnesses and suffering of old age.

Already in the ancient Indian medical treatise *Ayurveda* we find reflections on how to preserve youth that include a large measure of practical wisdom as well as advice relating to hygiene.

The famous Edwin Smith Papyrus contains advice dating to 4,000 years ago under the promising heading of "Primer for Transforming Old Men into Young Ones." But its remedies will disappoint those who favour drastic mea-

tures, for they generally concern cosmetics. At the end of the manuscript the ancient Egyptian author admits that these means only cure one of baldness, discolorations of the skin, and other unpleasant symptoms of old age.

A myth in ancient Greece claims that Medea, a sorceress, possessed the power to return youth by cutting old persons into pieces and boiling them in a cauldron containing magic herbs. Ancient traditions recall a king of ancient Greece who was subjected to this gruesome procedure, which proved to be fatal even though his operation was preceded by an "experiment" as a result of which Medea is said to have successfully rejuvenated a goat. The source of this legend is the ancient Egyptian myth concerning the resurrection and rejuvenation of Osiris and also the Orphic mysteries of ancient Greece. This idea of rejuvenation following a bath in a magic cauldron subsequently inspired Ovid, the Roman poet, and Zosimus, an Alexandrian alchemist. Let us also recall the phoenix, a mythical bird who also regained the freshness of youth by being burned and reborn from ashes.

The theme of rejuvenation is a favourite subject of many folk tales, such as for example the Japanese tale "The Fan of Youth" or one of the Grimm brothers' tales "The Man Who Was Reforged". In fact, in many folk tales the theme of rejuvenation through magical means is often presented in an ironic manner. For example, in one Japanese tale an old woman exceeded the required measure in bathing in a "rejuvenating source" and was transformed into a child—a point that is noted with considerable sarcasm. Let us also recall the sad fate of the Tsar in the Russian tale of the small hump-backed horse who, searching to regain his youth, leaped into a cauldron of boiling water and perished.

There was new emphasis on attempts to find a means of rejuvenation in Medieval times. While in ancient Greek literature old persons were always represented as attractive, in Medieval writings they appear ugly and repulsive. Hence such a passionate desire for rejuvenation. And Medieval astrologists, alchemists and philosophers searched for the "philosopher's stone" that would give a person wealth, power, and youth.

In alchemy the principal means for returning youth were thought to be gold, mummified corpses, snake meat, and human blood. This was explained as follows: gold, for

example, "is closely associated with the sun"—a source of heat, that "therefore" contributes to the preservation of the body's heat. Roger Bacon states that with the help of magic it is possible to liberate the human body from all "incorrect things" and to prolong life by centuries.¹ He especially recommended the use of gold, frankincense, pearls, rosemarine oil, the marrow of deer, raw snake meat, and ... the breath of young women.

The latter was associated with the following train of thought.

Old age is invariably accompanied by a loss of sexual potency, although many cases have been described in which persons as old as 120-150 years retained not only considerable mental powers but also physical powers, including sexual potency. For example, the famous Thomas Parr lived 152 years as a hard-working peasant. At the age of 120 he remarried a widow with whom he lived 12 years in such good health that according to his contemporaries, the widow did not notice his old age. But then exceptions simply confirm the general rule. At the same time, the human race is least of all disposed to categorically accept certain laws of life, and it is well-known that historically, especially in the 14th-18th centuries—at a time of intense interest in "black magic"—many efforts were made to prolong sexual potency in the most diverse ways, including some that today would be simply described as barbarous, even though they do refer to a relatively recent period in Europe—the cradle of Western civilization. One of these methods was vampirism, the drinking of the blood of young persons in order to regain youth. It is true that subsequently this black magic formula of the 16th-17th centuries was paradoxically embodied in the purely scientific method of blood transfusion. Equally widespread was the method of sunamitism—also a magical procedure based on the premise that the breath of young girls, which was thought to contain "the force of life in its full purity" (a view already stated by Roger Bacon), had rejuvenating powers. There is no need to describe how useless these efforts proved to be. Like all forms of magic, they were based

¹ R. Bacon, *De Retardatione Accidentium Senectutis cum Alliis Opusculis de Rebus Medicinalibus*, ed. by A. G. Little, E. Withington, Oxford University Press, 1928.

on the desire to accept one's wishes as reality.

At the same time one is struck by the persistence of magical "remedies" in Medieval society. They were quite common and resembled the advice given by Marcilio Ficino, a physician and philosopher. Ficino believed that when a man reached the age of ten times seven or nine times eight, the "tree of his body" became increasingly dry and, accordingly, in order to regain his youth, he should partake of the fluids of a young body. An elderly man was to find a young, healthy beautiful woman and drink the milk from her breast during a full moon; he should then eat powdered dill with sugar, for sugar prevents the souring of milk while dill facilitates its circulation to all organs.¹

The simplicity of such magical prescriptions was matched by that of its effect which was nil, even when radical means were employed: for example, old men of means would lie between two specially trained virgins—to no avail.

Magic remedies continued to be prescribed for a relatively long time. In the 16th century we find references to Paracelsus, the famous German physician who sought the "elixir of life", found it, drank it continuously, and ... died at the age of 48 years. In 1972, some German author found "King David's Prescription" for rejuvenation through heat in the writings of Medieval physicians. It was very popular at the time, but did not achieve the desired effect.

The Science of Life Stages

It is probably universally accepted that the Renaissance derived its inspiration from "enlightened Antiquity", even though opinions vary about that particular age in the human race's development. It is not important for us, however, whether we are contrasting the Renaissance to Medieval culture or whether we seek to find in them elements of a common cultural heritage. Ultimately, if one does not place exclusive emphasis on extreme points of view they coexist quite successfully (there is no doubt that the Renaissance emerged from Medieval society and that it differed from it substantially). In seeking to express the two epochs' joint

¹ Cf. B. Meyer, "Kuriosum. Frauenmilch als Verjüngsmittel", *J. Fleisch- und Milchhygiene*, No. 38, pp. 266-67, 1928.

legacy and distinctions we turn to the common idea of *quinta essentia* (fifth essence) which was born in Antiquity and persisted through Medieval society and the Renaissance. The ancient Greeks and Romans had in mind a certain fifth and moreover fundamental (substantial) element, namely, the fundamental essence that inspires and activates the other substances (water, earth, air, and fire—the first four essences). This fundamental essence was viewed as an elemental force from which man is born, just as Virgil saw in Aeneas' shipwreck a symbol of man's birth in the storms of existence. Beginning in the age of the Renaissance, it was man himself who became the central object for man, thus expressing an existential interest in his own life.

The changes in understanding the stages of life resulted from a changed attitude towards life itself. They began at the time of the Renaissance and were carried on by the Enlightenment and concerned above all the age of childhood, especially with respect to education. In Medieval society the art of education as practiced in Antiquity had been largely forgotten. While in earlier ages the world of children and that of adults were largely differentiated, in Medieval society children entered into adult life as soon as they could forego their mother's help (approximately at the age of 7). Children were immediately incorporated into their "adult family", with which they shared the burdens of everyday labour. Unlike in Antiquity, the family was not the focus of upbringing; its functions were limited to the continuation of life, the reproduction (in a purely physical sense) of a new generation and the transmission to it of property and a family name. In short, Medieval society did not at all associate its future with its children. Let us recall that this future was viewed as determined by altogether different governing principles (fate, destiny, etc.). Family concerns extended primarily to elder sons in their capacities as heirs.

The humanists of the Renaissance who "discovered the world and man" were also remarkably indifferent to pedagogics. While proclaiming man's lofty mission, they displayed little concern for educating man with a view to that mission. And during the Renaissance, childhood differed little from what it had been in the Dark Ages. Paradoxical though this may seem, the great men of the Renaissance did not substantially influence the further development of

man's age-related self-awareness; in that respect they were far behind the reformers of pedagogics (enlighteners) who struggled against the "anarchy" of Medieval society (and the Renaissance) in support of a strong family and a "new" type of education. The Enlightenment, which immediately followed the Renaissance, radically altered the character of childhood and defined the family and school as its spiritual teachers. The family was assigned to care for children and educate them. The school deprived the child of "freedom" and placed him in a world of harsh discipline which included corporal punishment and incarceration. In short, the world of children was separated from that of adults by barriers created by family education and schools.

While the Renaissance and the Enlightenment altered the position of children within society they did not ensure their happiness. Concern for their education was marred by harshness and occasionally cruel forms of discipline and punishment. The isolation of the world of children into a separate sphere created a barrier to the world of adults that children had to overcome at the threshold of entering the real, adult world. Schools began to prepare children for this life. They also became an instrument of allocating youngsters to specific social strata, sorting children in terms of "classes and social divisions" depending on their social origins. It is interesting to note that while in earlier times children belonging to different classes played the same games, at this point the very character of games began to be differentiated according to the social stratum.

Under capitalism changes in age-related self-awareness resulting from changes in social production, and in the character of life and its age boundaries proceeded simultaneously along several lines.

One of the most interesting lines of development has been recorded in literary works. This may be called the new discovery of childhood, which was made by the romantics in the early 19th century.

In his autobiography entitled *Poetry and Truth*, Goethe recalls that during his childhood (the mid-18th century) there was no children's literature (special books for children except, of course, textbooks), while in the early 19th century their number was already substantial.

In this respect Soviet researchers have observed that in order to reflect upon childhood one must first supercede it

to feel the burdens of another age. The concept of childhood as a distinct stage in spiritual development possessing its own value could only emerge from a sentimental-romantic attitudes. Classicism was altogether blind to the poetry of childhood—it was interested in universal model elements in man and viewed childhood as departure from the norm (as non-maturity) just as insanity is thought to be a psychological deviation from the norm (non-reason). An interest in childhood, but rather prosaic and didactic than poetic in character, could be discerned among representatives of the Enlightenment: in their democratic aspirations they began to write not only for members of society's third estate, thus extending literature beyond the boundaries of an elect aristocratic circle, but also for children (who were on the lower step in the age hierarchy), seeing in them a promising field that could produce valuable fruits of reason and virtue. The representatives of the Enlightenment were first to create a literature for children that was primarily didactic in character. However, it is only romanticism that recognized childhood not only as a utilitarian preparatory stage in age development but as a valuable world in itself, whose depth and freshness is also attractive to adults. All relations among age groups were inverted, as it were, in romantic psychology and aesthetics: where earlier childhood was perceived as an insufficient stage of development, now it was the adult age that appeared as less desirable and as having lost the immediacy and purity of childhood. In short, the romantics discovered childhood for world literature as an independent reality and a world in itself.

But there were also reasons for these changes that were far from romantic. In many respects they affected not only literature, where they were just more vividly expressed, but also pedagogics, politics and economics. Developed capitalist production was never opposed to the use of child labour (in many capitalist countries child labour is still used today). But as technologies became more complex and intensive the economy required trained, educated and skilled workers, and this ultimately led to a need for the more comprehensive training of future workers. Education underwent certain changes. Progressive political leaders struggled to prolong childhood and to prohibit child labour. All this necessarily influenced attitudes towards childhood in the

widest possible social context.

The attitude of capitalist society towards childhood can serve as a kind of "lithmus test", with regard to how the system treated the age problem in general. On the one hand, it was interested in skilled labour and concerned for education, but on the other, the exploitation of child labour existed (let us recall the vivid images produced by Dickens); on the one hand—childhood was transformed into an economic category and, on the other, it was viewed romantically, etc.

Bourgeois theoreticians, too, often arrive at equally contradictory conclusions. These may be shown in terms of the following example.

An inherently paradoxical situation has been noted in demographic literature, namely, that a deterioration of living conditions (war, unemployment, economic crises, inflation, etc.) is often, surprisingly, accompanied by a decline in child mortality. Some reactionary theoreticians maintain this as one of the "facts" that confirm their strange logic, namely "the worse it is—the better": the worse the situation of a country, the better it is for the population. (!?) In analyzing situations of this type Karl Marx wrote in the first volume of *Capital* that during the period of general unemployment and need physicians noticed that child mortality declined. Marx explains that the pause in industrial activities returned the now unemployed mothers at least for a time, to their children, and that this ultimately explained the improvement in care for children during that period.¹

In this connection one should note that the emergence of age-related and pedagogic psychology is in many ways indebted to the paradoxes of capitalism. The development of capitalist production and its increasingly complex nature required substantial improvements in the training of skilled personnel already by the late 19th century. This made it necessary to identify the most gifted and able children. As a result, psychologists faced the task of developing a procedure for discovering gifted children. This is what led to the famous I. Q. tests of French psychologists Binet and Simon which in effect marked the beginnings

¹ See: Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 1, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1984, p. 372.

of scientific child psychology.

Looking further back in time it should be noted that from the very outset capitalism stimulated scientific research which to a considerable extent helped raise production efficiency and, consequently, boosted profits and the ability of enterprises to compete. This was particularly true of the natural sciences. As a by-product this research produced a variety of concepts concerning age, e.g. physiological periodizations of age-related development, primarily viewed as the development of the organism. The following are some examples.

In the 19th century French physiologists made use of a classification system that divided human life into four periods.¹

1) childhood, ending at the age of 14 and 15 for boys and at the age of 11 for girls;

2) youth, ending at the age of 23-25 years for men and at the age of 19-20 for women;

3) age of maturity, ending at the age of 55-60 for both sexes;

4) old age beginning at the age of 55-60.

At the same time one of the most prominent French physiologists of the nineteenth century, Jean-Pierre Marie Flourence, relied on an entirely different classification system (see Table 10).

Table 10

Classification of Life Stages (according to J.-P. Flourence)

№.	Period	Years
1.	First period of childhood	0- 9
2.	Second period of childhood	10-19
3.	First youth	20-29
4.	Second youth	30-39
5.	First period of maturity	40-54
6.	Second period of maturity	54-69
7.	First period of old age	70-85
8.	Second period of old age	after 85

¹ E. Rosset, *Proces starzenia sie ludnoŝci*, p. 3.

Another classification system is that of Ludwig Aschoff, a German specialist in pathological anatomy and the founder of modern functional pathology.

He identifies ten periods:

- 1) the period of uterine development
- 2) newly born children—until the seventh day of life
- 3) infancy—until the seventh month of life
- 4) childhood—until the seventh year of life
- 5) adolescence—until the age of 14
- 6) maturing—until the age of 25
- 7) maturity—until the age of 45
- 8) the beginning of old age—until the age of 65
- 9) old age—until the age of 85
- 10) advanced old age—above 85 years.

Let us note that L. Aschoff first introduced a period of development preceding birth and secondly greatly extended and subdivided both old age and childhood.

Generally, though they are not without interest, these periodizations did not contribute anything fundamentally new to understanding age-related divisions of human life. They do not differ greatly from speculative concepts of earlier times and, unlike those concepts, they merely emphasize a naturalistic line in understanding age (reducing age-related changes to a somatic basis).

The more fundamental changes that occurred in the 19th century concerned not the periodization of life in terms of its stages but rather an understanding of the essence of individual stages. We have already mentioned changes in attitudes towards childhood. Let us also note changes in attitudes towards old age.

It has already been shown that old age as a specific period of human development has evolved historically. Moreover, both in reality and in the consciousness of our predecessors, old age began relatively early in life and was rather closely connected with the age of youth. Molière's "aged creatures" are still relatively young, for old age was perceived not as physical weakness but rather as aging, which does in fact begin much before the arrival of old age itself. And more generally, old age was still not particularly respected in very recent times—it was associated with excessive religious zeal, empty prattle, forgetfulness and many other failings.

While reflection and research on old age began a very

long time ago (already at the time of Hippocrates, Cicero, and Galen) and was the subject of relatively intensive study in modern times it has continued to be approached in a context originally defined by Cicero: *senectus ipse est morbus*. By insisting in the late 19th century on the need to overcome this neglect of old age, Jean Charcot, a prominent French physician, psychiatrist, and psychologist, made France the centre of scientific gerontology for many years to come. In Russia the same course of overcoming prejudices concerning old age was followed by Ilya Mechnikov in the late nineteenth century and, after the 1917 Socialist Revolution, by Soviet researchers.

In effect, we may speak of a fundamentally new approach to the old age developed by researchers at the turn of the century that considered it equal in importance to other stages in life; no longer were the final years of life reduced to processes of disintegration, rather, they were viewed as having their own value goals and specific characteristics.

There were many reasons for the growing interest in old age, including: demographic considerations (the human race began to "age" in the late 19th century and early 20th century, i.e., the proportion of aged persons in society increased); economic factors (the nature of production activities required skill and experience that are developed with age); medical considerations (i.e., overcoming a number of diseases and thus prolonging the span of life) and finally religious and philosophical discussions concerning human immortality combined in a surprising fashion with advances in biology which many people expected to scientifically substantiate the promise of eternal life.

What can we then conclude from a survey of the history of life stages in the recent past? The reader has probably already noted that we have found it increasingly difficult to remain within the framework of a particular point of view. In considering the meaning of the problem of life stages, an increasing role is played by pedagogics and economics, jurisprudence and aesthetics. Most probably, however, it would be appropriate to emphasize science as the leading form of social consciousness in the nineteenth century. For it is scientific research that typifies the treatment of the problem of age today. For us this approach is embodied in the science of psychology through which we

shall seek to review the problem of life stages today. In such a context the object of our studies will be the age problem in a developed socialist society.

Stages of Life in the Modern World

To neglect history would disorient us with regard to the element of time. We think that it would not be inappropriate to recall this in summarizing our short survey of the history of life stages. What lessons can we derive from this survey as we turn to an analysis of age-related changes in personality development today? We may note that even a brief study of the historical development of life stages does not leave any doubt as to the social origins and cultural-historical specificity of the age aspects of human life. It is not a natural law within us and not a biological rhythm of existence but a historically unfolding process of formation of the stages of human life (a process that has not yet been completed) that constitutes the essence of a balanced approach to the subject.

Those changes in age-related dynamics of human life that we will describe as "contemporary" are nothing else than both the outcome of a specific historical process and a point in that process (for the development has not yet been completed). And today, at the end of the twentieth century, we are witnessing new changes that can probably be understood and explained comprehensively only in the future. Yet even today we are not entirely helpless as we consider new facts and phenomena, for we possess the priceless experience of the past, which alone makes it possible to record these changes that today are influencing the entire spectrum of life stages. Substantial changes have taken place in the period of childhood. There has been a tendency to prolong this stage because man needs an increasing amount of time to develop his abilities and master those human qualities that social life, work and creativity require. At the same time, childhood, at all its stages, is intensified as the "programme" of personality development and the time-table for social upbringing and general education are becoming more condensed. Substantial changes take place in adolescence as a specific stage in personality development (a transitional stage from childhood to adulthood), and in

the case of certain developing peoples, this stage has appeared for the first time. Changes in the phase of early youth are taking place literally before our very eyes, and new meaning is lent to youth and maturity when age boundaries are expanding as they borrow years from old age. Old age itself has been pushed back in time. Even more important changes are taking place in the age consciousness of individuals. In short, the history of life stages has not ceased to develop, and each new generation adds a new page to that history. We will now turn to the age-related changes of personality development the way we perceive them in the 1980s.

CHAPTER 3

CHILDHOOD

“...There was at one time a saying
That children are only preparing
to live.
But he who has not lived in
childhood
Will hardly be useful in life.”

S. Marshak

Everything Begins With Childhood

The First Cry

“The Activization Complex”

The Best That a Child Can Do With a Toy

The Role of Games in a Child's Life

The Child Learns to Learn

Everything Begins with Childhood

Human life begins with childhood and so does the study of that life. Today child psychology represents nine-tenths of all research in age-related psychology. It holds great potential and offers opportunities for formulating and testing methods of research and various concepts. It is a staging ground for the most daring hypotheses, suppositions and doubts.

Moreover, an author who has decided to consider the entire range of human life stages finds himself in a somewhat difficult position. The dilemma that he must resolve is simple and yet relatively "rigid". On the one hand, the abundance of data in modern science and the detailed character of findings relating to questions of child psychology is such that if we followed it, it would occupy a disproportionately large share in our comparative analysis of all other personality development stages. On the other hand, in an extremely concise survey of child psychology, any omissions unavoidably represent a loss with regard to overall presentations, for everything begins with childhood. And if one omits an essential element it would become difficult to find a place for it in the subsequent exposition.

The present exposition is based on the analytical scheme of stages in the psychological development of children that has been adopted in Soviet psychology. In effect it generalizes the findings of several generations of Soviet psychologists (Lydia Bozhovich, Pavel Blonsky, Lev Vygotsky, Vassili Davydov, Alexander Zaporozhets, Alexei Leontiev, Maya Lisina, Nikolai Poddiakov, Lia Slavina, and others). That scheme, based on an identification of dominant types of activity and associated new psychological formations, may be described as follows.

Infancy (from birth to the age of one year) is characterized by direct emotional communication between the child and adults. At this stage there is a need for contact and mutual relations between children and adults. This joint-divided activity then becomes the basis of all subsequent personality development and a necessary form in the child's

assimilation of social experience.

In early childhood (between the ages of 1 and 3), a child's personality development emphasizes object-manipulating activities. It is at this time that children assimilate socially developed modes of using the objects in their environment.

Pre-school-age children (between the ages of 3 and 7) are fond of role-playing. This allows the child to discover the existence of specific social functions and norms of behaviour. He develops a need to be guided by these functions and norms in correlating his own actions with them. Moreover, role-playing develops a capacity for imagination and symbolic substitution that plays a fundamental role in the subsequent process of learning.

Early school years, which extend from the age of 7 to 10, are entirely associated with learning activities. In the course of that process children begin to develop a theoretical relation to reality, an ability to orient themselves in theoretical (ideal) forms of reflection of objects and interpersonal interactions and, specifically, an ability to operate with abstract concepts.

This then is the fundamental image of age-related changes of children's personality development suggested by current theories.

We have thus presented our general outline of the principle for organizing findings relating to child psychology. In the present chapter we will attempt to reveal the principal elements of personality development during childhood. In following the principles of the historical-theoretical approach (formulated earlier) to the laws that govern personality development, we shall present the point of view of Soviet psychologists on that development, relying on findings of child psychology studies. We know that psychological development proceeds in the course of actions. But precisely how?

The First Cry

Anyone who has heard that first cry will never forget it... A human child has entered the world. In this respect a newly born infant violates the silent agreement found in all living nature: no creature disrupts the usual range of

sounds of surrounding life with his own voice as he makes his appearance. Kittens and puppies as well as such "heavy weights" as elephants and hippopotami are silent when born. Only human infants cry.

Why?

Is it not because upon leaving the mother's womb they are shocked by the chaos of blinding light and sounds that surround them, by the hot air penetrating the delicate tissues of their lungs? Of course the transition of a human being from intra-uterine to extra-uterine existence is not gradual—it represents an explosion, a leap, a revolution. Nature and adults greet the birth of man unceremoniously. The obstetrician grabs him by his feet and cuts the umbilical cord which had served to maintain his existence for so long. The child is wrapped in blankets that are harsh against his delicate skin, and he must inhale a hot stream of air, which he strives to expel from his lungs. In short, his cry is a type of rebellion against everything that is associated with the process of birth. But is that all?

Now the most difficult events are behind him. Already exhausted by the effort of his own birth and in a state of near shock, he falls asleep and gathers new strength that will be needed for the next step. Although he is born he does not yet know that his system "has come into operation", that his life support mechanisms now deprived of the assistance of his mother's organism, are working hard to ensure an autonomous form of existence. He does not know that the usual ritual accompanying the birth of a human being is taking its course—that his mother has fallen asleep; that his wildly happy father is accepting the congratulations of friends; that telephones are ringing and telegrams are being sent to close relatives announcing his birth. He does not know that possibly he already has a name that was perhaps prepared long beforehand. He does not know that his birth has already been recorded in government statistics and that a place has already been prepared for him in social life—in a nursery, kindergarten, school, and in production. He is awaited in the most diverse branches of the economy that are counting on his labour, in scientific research institutions counting on his intellect and creative abilities. He still does not know that he has entered into our world with its long history, modern contradictions, and ecological crises. He is sleeping soundly and calmly.

Thus, a human being has been born. He will not be confused with any other creature. But is he just a human individual (representative of his species)? Or possibly an individuality (for while he resembles his father or mother he is also unlike anyone else and unique)?

These seemingly innocent questions lead us directly to the heart of heated controversies in which words, or more precisely, terms and concepts, play an important role. For the debate, of course, concerns not words and terminology. The task of scientific cognition lies in understanding certain contents, i.e., in expressing them in terms of concepts. Hence the importance of arriving at correct definitions.

Not many psychologists today adhere to Locke's view of a child as a *tabula rasa* ("clean slate") on which the necessary contents are inscribed by education and training. More current today is the belief in the decisive role of heredity (genotype). Proponents of this view maintain that the newly born child's genotype contains in an encoded form all the principal personality traits that will subsequently merely mature and come to full expression. Today these two extreme positions, which express the struggle of two factors in a child's development—that of the environment and of heredity—generally coexist and complement each other. More often than not the only task facing a researcher is to establish where particular traits originate, i.e., which ones derive from heredity and which from education and training.

In order to avoid the eclecticism that arises in such cases and the mixing of different types of arguments, it is best to abandon altogether attempts to view man as a product and result of the interaction of particular factors, and instead to look for the self-development of personality within ontogenesis itself. It will be necessary to define somewhat more precisely the concept of personality from which activity theory derives.

At what point individuality begins? Our answer is very clear—from the moment of birth, for individuality is precisely that which man inherits at the moment of his birth. In being born man not only brings into the world the psychophysiological organization that he has inherited from his parents, thus entering into a process of physical interaction with the environment; he not only inherits a specific social origin and position; he also inherits his own individual per-

sonality, and for that reason enters into historical reality.¹ Man is never so close to his life ideals (although in their abstract-universal definition) and never possesses greater possibilities for unfettered development than at the moment of his birth.

In that respect it is interesting to recall Hegel's concept of childhood: childhood is the time of "a natural harmony between the subject's world and both himself and the environment, ... a beginning free from contradictions".²

This is a state of innocence and of harmony between the spirit and the body, for the spirit is not yet awakened. "This is an immediate, hence non-spiritual, purely natural unity of the individual with his species and with the world generally."³

The very attempt to provide a concept of childhood deserve serious attention. In effect, today pedagogics and psychology rely on a certain intuitive concept of childhood and a child, whose meaning is reduced to a negative definition (someone who is not yet adult) and is based at best on a recognition of a qualitative distinction between a child's life and that of an adult and the recognition of the role of childhood in human development. Today we know much more about children than did Hegel, but this does not diminish the importance of the fact that we cannot define the object of our knowledge in any other way than purely empirically. An awareness of this implies the formulation of a cardinal theoretical problem of modern child psychology (as a part of age-related psychology).

The child's identity with existence and his direct unity with the human race that Hegel postulates also serves, in his theory, as the point of departure for personality development (self-development). For the ultimate aim of personality development, according to Hegel, is to re-establish a unity with the species and define oneself as a subject of the species' life—historical, cultural and social. Thus, in effect, a child possesses that which adults seek so painfully to

¹ See F. Mikhailov, "Moral Upbringing and the Upbringing of Personality", in *Psikhologicheskiye problemy nraustvennogo vospitaniya detei* (Psychological Problems of Moral Upbringing of Children), Moscow, The USSR Academy of Pedagogical Sciences, 1977, pp. 6-11.

² G. W. F. Hegel, *System der Philosophie*. Dritter Teil. Stuttgart., 1929, s. 97.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

achieve—an immediate personality, but only as a universal possibility of general development; in principle he has a capacity for everything (he is equivalent to existence) but he has not yet achieved anything. And because he has not yet achieved anything his personality is “a pure personality”, as it were.

This is of fundamental importance. For according to the principle of development, that which develops must already contain in itself from the very beginning elements of its further development. In this way a child is a “pure personality” that realizes itself in the course of its development in a unity of diversity as an individuality, as a unique being, as a developing personality. In the course of further analysis such a “dual” definition of personality (“pure personality” and “developed personality”) will become clearer, for we are thinking of personality development not as a linear movement, accumulation, and growth, but as a qualitative process of change in which the identity of the individual with the species is mediated in its changes by the element of individualization and development through opposites.

We consider Hegel’s idea of the originally undifferentiated simple identification of individuals and the species in the case of a child to be extremely important and view it as an initial (simplest) concept of personality. This makes it possible to subsequently avoid the inferring of personality from impersonal objectivity and thus to avoid reducing the individual’s personality to a certain sum of object relations through which it develops but to which it is not reduced. This also defines the basic direction of personality development, namely, the re-establishment of an identity with species norms, i.e., the emergence of a subject of historical, cultural and social activity. Accordingly all other metamorphoses of the personality will be considered as elements of that development including those that are associated with the separation of individual activity from species activities (the development of identity through distinction).

But it is also important to not only emphasize the thought concerning the initial identity of the individual and the species but also the transition to individuation. For individuation is that universal mechanism for acquiring universal modes of activity that the theory of genetically-acquired types of activity views as the basis for personality changes. In such a context it is clear that if one does not

link these two elements together (original identity and subsequent individuation), they will appear to us as different things and their very singling out will lose all logical meaning: the initial identity of the individual and species will then be an empty abstraction while their individuation will be subordinated to the particular object-orientation that prevails at specific stages of an individual's life in the form of his dominant activity.

We will thus conclude that initially, personality development is a transition from a simple unseparated identity of the individual and the species ("personality") to an individuation that establishes the uniqueness of the simple "self" ("individual").

"The Activization Complex"

A human child cannot survive without adults. Unlike animals, human children are not able to live in the world by themselves without outside assistance—they do not possess the particular set of instincts that make it possible for animals to survive. Children need care—they must be fed, clothed, and looked after. In performing their parental duties, humans also carefully follow a child's development—at least this is true of attentive parents. Such observations have provided numerous interesting findings concerning the initial period of personality development. The first such study was published in 1881 by Charles Darwin, who described his observations of his own son's development. Similar studies of their own children were kept in diaries by Wilhelm Preyer, Nadezhda Ladygina-Kots, Natalia Menchinskaya, and Valeria Mukhina. They all contain a common theme, namely, the role of direct communication between parents and children. Moreover, there are grounds here to rely on a specific method of scientific analysis, namely, the rule of contraries, especially since it is in this way that the most interesting principles governing personality development in infants were established.

We began by considering an ideal situation, namely, the one where a child receives the care of his parents and closest relatives. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. There are many children today who are deprived of parental care. There are cases where a mother abandons a child that she does not want at the maternity home. Of course

the fate of such children today is not as terrible as in ancient times when abandoned children were destined to perish. Care is provided by the state, which places a child in a childcare centre. It might at first appear that upon being admitted to such a centre a child acquires what is most important, namely, care on the part of adults: he is clothed and fed. However, the mortality of children in childcare centres was, until recently, substantially higher than in families. What is the explanations? Carelessness? Poor nutrition? A failure to supply vital necessities? It became evident that these were not the reasons. Children in such centres are provided in ways that are not very different from those who live in families. But why did they not smile and why did they develop slowly and remain apathetic? The answer was found in a purely empirical manner. Different researchers have noted at different times (let us mention above all Nikolai Shelovanov, a Soviet physiologist) that if the nurse on duty gives a greater measure of attention to the child and literally does not leave it for a moment the situation improves. Disturbing symptoms vanish. The child begins to smile and to be active. In some particularly difficult cases a simple but very effective "medicine" was of help. The nurse on duty carried the child with her, warming him with her body, and becoming one with him, as it were. It became clear that a newborn suffers most from insufficient communication resulting in an illness that psychologists have called "hospitalism". It was possible to cure this illness in only one way, namely, through a large dose of human communication. Let us add, however, that in certain advanced cases even this did not help; the illness has proceeded too far and the child either perished or became strongly retarded in its development—the wound imparted in infancy left its mark for its entire life.

The discovery of the fundamental role of human communication in the initial psychological development of the individual substantially confirmed the theoretical concept of infancy proposed by Lev Vygotsky. Vygotsky based his view on the proposition that the child is a "social being from the very beginning" who lives and develops among other persons. In seeking to understand a child's internal world and to establish the way in which he gradually separates himself from the outside world, beginning from the indistinct amorphous state of oneness with his mother, it

is important to clarify precisely what it is that takes place in the joint activity of the mother (or other adults) and the child. On the surface we see a number of simple acts in that communication: on the part of the adult these are vocal sounds and words, face expression, gestures; on the part of the child they are preverbal vocalisms, uncoordinated movements of limbs and body, and smiles. But this activity, which researchers have called direct, emotional communication, as the dominant activity in infancy, produces the individual's basic psychological development. Its outcome is the appearance (approximately at the sixth week of a child's life) of an "activization complex". That term was introduced in the 1920s by Nikolai Shelovanov to denote the behaviour of children at a specific stage of ontogenesis in experiencing actions that make them happy. Psychologists have noted that during the second month of a child's life he begins to be active and seeks to attract the attention of adults through smiles, uncoordinated movements of feet and hands, and simple monosyllabic sounds. This surprising reaction, the "activization complex", is viewed by researchers as an important indicator of a normal course of personality development. Hospitalism as a negative phenomenon of psychological development expresses itself at that age in a retardation of the "activization complex", its weak manifestation, or else its complete absence. To overcome hospitalism, which, incidentally, may also appear in children who live at home if mothers and fathers are inattentive, the principle of relating to a child as a subject and as an individual was formulated; infants should be "reared", not just "cared for". At the heart of these principles lies direct emotional communication between children and their mothers.

It should be noted that these studies were substantially influenced by reflexology and that the "activization complex" was viewed primarily as a child's reaction to adult actions. Contemporary researchers, especially Maya Lisina and Sofia Meshcheriakova-Zamogilnaya, have substantially changed that approach by showing that the activization complex is in fact an action on the part of the child rather than a reaction. Maya Lisina's sensitive experiments have demonstrated that in cases in which adults are too active in communication and actively express their attention and good will, children become less active and more concentrat-

ed. And conversely, when adults are not too generous in expressing their attention children behave more actively. In short, the adults' task is to induce activity in children through communication. Experienced psychologists and perceptive mothers know well how to sense the boundary beyond which one should cease one's own activity and allow children to express themselves, to take a growing role in sustaining the delicate thread that links living beings through a spontaneous emotional mode of human communication. In short, as in all education generally, in the case of direct emotional communication as well it is important not to replace with one's own activity that of the child and to give it a possibility for self-development by allowing it to follow "autonomously".

When a child's development proceeds normally, an extremely important new psychological formation develops within direct emotional communication, namely, a system of affective personal ties between the child and the world, "a need for goodwill and attention" (Maya Lisina) and "a need for impressions" (Lydia Bozhovich). It is largely on such a basis that further personality development takes place.

In short, extrapolating from the multiplicity of aspects of personality development in infancy, we have sought to show their integral unity that is expressed, according to Soviet psychologists, in the sphere of direct emotional communication between children and adults and is embodied in the "activization complex". In this case, a child's development is sound. Adults are happy as is the child himself as he senses unfailingly the pulse of his own development (everything is proceeding normally) and smiles. An increasing number of toys and rattles appear on his bed, and the child becomes more attentive towards them. He has now learned to hold his head and has perhaps tried other foods that gradually replace his mother's breast, his movements are increasingly active and confident; he begins to crawl and is about to stand up, supporting himself with his arms by grasping the play-pen's rails; soon he will walk. Before this happens, however, he will experience something that is both surprising and mysterious, new and unusual, namely, the first crisis of psychological development.

The Best That A Child Can Do With A Toy

Hegel noted very perceptively that the best thing that a child can do with a toy is to break it. When taken out of context this view appears strange to say the least. But we know that Hegel did not advocate destruction. We must clarify what he meant by this statement, especially since parents usually become very angry when they see brand new toys being broken.

Once again we should begin at the beginning, that is, with the time when this phenomenon first appears. It usually occurs as follows. For a time during his first year (between the age of six months and one year), a child is interested in toys but only up to a point, more precisely, to the extent that he receives these toys from the hands of an adult who wishes to draw his attention to it. This proves to be a relatively difficult task. In the experiments carried out by Maya Lisina and her associates, it was noted that in actively responding to the wish of an adult to attract his attention with the help of a toy, a child entirely concentrates his attention on the adult himself—he will glance at the toy for an instant and then will again look at the person carrying out the experiment. Approximately towards the end of the first year, something changes. The toy itself (or just any object in the hands of an adult) begins to increasingly interest him. He studies it and tries to grasp it. What can explain this change?

First of all we should realize that now the child is no longer what he was in the early months of his first year. The year was full of emotionally laden events and marked by much work on the part of adults and the child, as a result of which numerous new psychological qualities emerged and substantial experience was accumulated. Initial attempts to speak have now already taken place as well as those to crawl and stand up. In short, the background has been formed for autonomous activities, which are no longer always directly associated with actions of adults.

While earlier the child had observed what was being done with him with passive though benevolent interest (he was about to be fed or clothed and hence would now be taken out for an airing, etc.), a year-old toddler no longer displays such readiness to accept the activities of adults. Yet as in the past no one asks him whether he wishes to

go out for a walk, to eat, or to go to bed. And the child begins to rebel—he does not submit to demands, he may be depressed, he cries, and resists attempts of adults to feed him, for example, or to put him to bed. The rebellion in effect says: dear adults, you have failed to note important changes—I am already able to attend to my own behaviour. I am no longer so closely tied to you. I now have “my own self”. And by the way, I would very much like to know what you are holding in your hands—let me see it. You won’t. Then I will reach for it myself... And he reaches for it and cries. This is the crisis of a one-year-old child which has still been little studied in psychological research even though its existence has long ceased to be doubted. It is an activity crisis, a crisis of the social situation of development in which a directly emotional form of communication ceases to be adequate in relation to the new needs of the child. A new period of life begins—that of early childhood.

Already in the 1940s Soviet psychological literature held that manipulative activity played a leading role in early childhood (between the ages of one and three). In the emergence of manipulative activities a fundamental role is played by the new social situation in the child’s development as he begins to understand his position in the surrounding world of persons and objects; he moves in space; he can act autonomously, meeting his own needs (grasping food); he develops a capacity for early forms of verbal communication. According to Lydia Bozhovich, it is these specific characteristics that distinguish the social situation of development in early childhood from that of infancy.

In this period the tasks of further development and the methods for resolving them are linked to each other in a paradoxical manner. In particular, the basic task that the child seeks to solve is that of self-cognition, gaining a knowledge of one’s self as a subject of action (What can I do?), but—and this is what defines the paradox—the child solves it not in the manner of a philosopher who passively “observes” his internal world but by directing his activity to external objects. At this age the child likes to repeat particular movements many times, following and controlling changes that this permits him to effect (he moves an object, opens and closes a door, etc.). Through this manipulative activity, the child solves a number of tasks the most important of which is to become aware of himself as some-

thing separate from the world of objects (the formation of the subject of action) and assimilate specifically human modes of relations to things and actions with them. It is possible to show the role that is played by such manipulative or, more precisely, object-oriented manipulative activity by considering the experiments of Ivan Sokolianski and Alexander Meshcheriakov in educating blind, deaf and dumb children.

Developing the psychological capacities of such children is in fact a unique scientific experiment "offered by nature" (Alexei Leontiev) that makes it possible to follow major principles governing the development of human psychological capacities generally and to make that process directly observable. This is because in the case of a normal child it is not possible to fully distinguish the multiplicity of factors under whose influence psychological capacities develop and to follow and record their operation. Many behavioural habits, emotions, and specific traits of personality develop "by themselves" as it were, in the course of daily life. But in the case of children who are blind, deaf and dumb, the situation is altogether different. Here the initial emergence of higher psychological functions takes place in "pure conditions", i.e., in the complete absence of uncontrolled psychogenic influences on the brain. Moreover, the conclusions that one can infer from such research are relevant not only for the case of handicapped children but—and this is the main thing—make it possible to cast light on general principles governing personality development.

More specifically, this type of research has made it possible to establish the following: it appears that the only way to overcome what seems to be the insurmountable barrier to psychological development resulting from a serious illness—loss of hearing and sight and, as a result, of speech as well—at an early age, consists precisely in what interests us in the present context, namely, the child's actions with objects in the world around him. Numerous attempts to initiate work on the psychological development of blind, deaf and dumb children by speech therapy have failed. Researchers were able to achieve substantial results in such children's psychological development only after Ivan Sokolianski attempted to develop the psychology of blind, deaf and dumb children by encouraging them in elementary habits of looking after themselves—feeding themselves with a

spoon, toilet training, dressing and undressing themselves, etc. In the studies of Alexander Meshcheriakov, a student of Ivan Sokolianski, it was clearly demonstrated that the psychological development of children takes place in the process of learning to act in the world of things, through mastering actions relating to them and mastering their social role and significance. By developing in a child who is blind, deaf and dumb an ability to act with objects, ranging from simple manipulations to mastering an object as an instrument, researchers are able to create a human relation to the world of objects.

One may find many similarities, moreover, between the assimilation of object-oriented reality by children who are blind, deaf and dumb and normal children. It begins with a familiarization with the object (for example, a spoon): the object is "examined" in either a literal or metaphoric sense (it is felt). The child may not display interest in the object itself and may even drop it, for the object is initially not significant. Only when the tutor begins to engage the child in a joint action with the object (for example, teaching him to eat with the help of a spoon) does the object "come alive" in the child's consciousness and manipulations with it become increasingly persistent (attempts are made to operate with it). That process of mastering an object is not learning in the full sense of the word, in the sense of the development of a stable response to an object. What the tutor seeks to produce is not a reaction on the part of the child but an action, and to include the object in the sphere of his vital activities. Meshcheriakov describes with considerable refinement the procedure of teaching children who are blind, deaf and dumb to eat with the help of spoon. At first the child will resist such teaching. He will try to throw down the spoon which is "in the way" when he seeks to eat with his hands. Gradually, however, he engages himself in operating with the spoon, initially holding it together with a tutor, who directs and also corrects his movements. The following aspect is significant: the task of the tutor is to catch that point in the teaching process at which the child begins to operate with a spoon autonomously and release the spoon from his hand. As in any psychological development, in the case of children who are blind, deaf and dumb as well, it is important not simply to teach a child to operate with objects but to include that action

into the process of personality self-development, without substituting external intervention for the latter. In mastering the simplest modes of action with objects of everyday life and learning to utilize them in accordance with their design, a child who is blind, deaf and dumb enters into the object world of culture and on that basis subsequently perceives much more easily the sign system of human culture (language), and over the long term acquires an ability to attain highly advanced levels of psychological development.

One may find further details concerning this entire research in Alexander Meshcheriakov's excellent work,¹ while we will now leave this subject after noting those findings that are most important for understanding the ontogenesis of psychological development of normal children. The main point concerns the fundamental importance of object manipulation in human personality development. Between the ages of one and three years, the child is absorbed in an extremely important and responsible activity of assimilating the world of objects of human culture. In the difficult period of child rearing when a small child suddenly becomes the tormentor of his parents and other family members and causes substantial damage to the objects that surround him (tearing wallpaper, pulling a tablecloth from the table together with glasses or dishes, seeking to thrust his finger into electric outlets) and when he cannot be let out of sight for a moment lest he harm himself as well, the child is actually engaged in a highly positive activity, namely, the development of his own personality. It is not because of some evil force or inherent destructiveness within him that he breaks toys but for a much simpler and more important reason, namely, he is looking for answers to such questions as what kind of object is this, what is its function, how is it constructed, what can be done with it, what is it called? And a torn doll is nothing other than a sign of that cognitive activity, for after breaking it and discovering cotton inside, the child is both sad and triumphant: he is sad because he regrets breaking the doll but is happy at his discovery that it contains cotton stuffing. During this period the child

¹ A. I. Mescheriakov, *Slepoglukhonemye Deti* (Children Who are Blind, Deaf, and Dumb), Moscow, Pedagogika Publishers, 1974.

masters an immense volume of knowledge concerning the world of objects—he identifies the functions of furniture, kitchen utensils and clothing. Today children easily include such complex devices as telephones, television sets, and automobiles into the object content of the world as “their own”. In short, they discover the world of objects of human life and at the same time there begins the complex and responsible work in mastering the world of signs. This starts with the assimilation of language and speech—these very powerful instruments of human thinking. And initial attempts already are being made to break through the world of human objects into the world of human relations.

These attempts become especially persistent towards the end of the third year when, having assimilated his object environment, the child begins to show a growing interest in the world of relations. He becomes capricious, “experiments” with adults—to see, for example, what will happen if his parents’ instructions are ignored. A new crisis of psychological development begins which marks the child’s complete mastery of object manipulations as his age’s dominant activity—this ceases to satisfy him. It is through that crisis that he moves on to a new form of activity.

What is then the crisis of three-year-old children?

A docile quiet child is transformed before our very eyes into a small dictator. He seeks to do everything by himself: to dress, to construct a tower from blocks and, above all, he decides for himself what he will do at a particular time. The child insists on his independence and rejects detailed forms of assistance, even though in many cases he still needs it and is not yet able to do what he wishes. This crisis is accompanied by the words “by myself” and informs us that the child has mastered his object environment, that he now orients himself effectively in it and that he needs a new and wider field of activity—for the manipulation of objects has exhausted its positive potential. There arises a need to replace the dominant form of activity and do it at the right time.

Lydia Bozhovich observes in that connection that towards the end of the second year children easily overcome this crisis, but after the age of three, it often assumes difficult forms marked by negativism and obstinacy, and this creates a distorted relation to required norms of behaviour and distorted relations with adults as well. “We have observed one child,” she writes (about four years old) “who read

a poem in the following way: 'On waves that were not waves and that were not blue and were not ocean waves, stars that were not stars and that do not shine in a sky that is not a sky'... We also met another child of the same age who wanted to draw but when adults began to approve of his intention began to cry and demanded: 'Tell me not to draw', and only after his wish was met did he begin to draw with pleasure."

As a rule the crisis of three years is weathered without complications for it is resolved through a transition to a remarkable form of activity, namely, role playing, which absorbs the child and governs his development during the next three years.

The Role of Games in a Child's Life

As in the case of preceding forms of dominant activity in ontogenesis, playing possesses a certain universal significance in human life. The direct emotional communication, too, that governed for a time the psychological development of infant, reappears at subsequent stages of personality development in a number of personal qualities (capacity for empathy, capacity to love and be loved, capacity for joint emotional experience, etc.). Similarly, object manipulating activities that govern the development of children between the ages of one and three will subsequently be reflected in highly complex forms of human activities and unique and highly developed abilities to operate in object environment and control one's body (painting, sculpture, gymnastics, etc.). In that respect it may be that playing games is the most promising type of activity. In particular, the entire sphere of synthetic arts (theatre, cinema) is based on role playing, and the social functions that man performs possess specific role characteristics (the "roles" of a father, a director, etc.). Similarly many methods of psychological correction and psychological hygiene (psychotherapy, "psychodrama") are also built on role playing. In short, games play an important role in all of human life. But for preschool children (between the ages of three and six-seven) it operates as a dominant activity and as a basic form and means of psychological development.

Alexei Leontiev notes that games become a dominant activity for preschool children because the world of objects

of which children are aware is at that time widening increasingly. It begins to include not only objects that constitute the immediate environment of the child and with which he is able to operate himself, but also objects with which adults operate but that remain physically inaccessible to children. In short, games take on a new meaning during the period of transition from early childhood to preschool age due to the widening of the range of human objects that the child must now master and that he becomes aware of in the course of further psychological development.¹

There the object environment being mastered by the child becomes more complex. Let us recall that he has already "mastered" certain modes of operation with objects—many things no longer constitute a mystery for him: his spoon, clothing, pottery, more complex devices such as telephones and television sets that he is able to use even though he does not understand their functioning. But what can he do, for example, with regard to the automobile that he observes, in which he sits and rides, but which he cannot drive, to the oar which he is not strong enough to wield, to a store where his parents buy toys for him (*they buy on his behalf*), in short, with the very wide range of human objects and relations in which he is already engaged and that he observes, but is unable to participate in. He notes with regret, moreover, that no one intends to teach him to use these objects and relations (even the most doting parents will not dream of teaching a three-year-old child to drive an automobile). And yet the child, let us recall, seeks to operate independently ("by myself").

It is in such a context that he is saved by games where that seemingly impassable boundary between "I want" and "I can" disappears. In playing a child can do all those things that are still inaccessible to him in real life: he can drive a car (a bus, a train, an airplane), row a boat—but why simply a boat, he could even steer an ocean liner (from the child's room to father's study and back). Games perform fundamental functions in a child's psychological development and advance that development by creating a "zone of nearest development" (Lev Vygotsky) within which

¹ A. N. Leontiev, *Izbrannye Psikhologicheskkiye Sochinenia* (Selected Psychological Works) in two volumes, Vol. 1, Moscow, Pedagogika Publishers, 1983, p. 304.

the child moved as he continues to develop his abilities and ultimately to develop his personality, that is, to effect his self-development.

Because he is free to choose the subject of his games the child can quickly pass from one object environment to others. Within minutes a chair is transformed from the bus driver's seat into a store shelf, a sheet of paper that a moment ago was a medical prescription making it possible to "order" medicine for a teddy bear is turned into money with which children "pay" in a store for a variety of food products intended for their dolls, etc. In games "everything can become anything else": a spoon may become a telephone receiver, a telephone receiver can become a radio station for a "polar expedition", a soft couch can become the "North Pole", and a rug can become a "flying carpet". This surprising ability to replace real objects by their signs (by using other objects in the environment), the ability for symbolic substitutions, develops within the child an extremely important quality that will serve him well in future life (above all in school). For a time the child becomes all-powerful, practically unbounded in his sway over the object sphere of human life: it is enough for him to say as he looks at a table: "this is a cosmodrome", and within minutes spaceships begin to fly from its launching pads.

The games of preschool children possess one significant quality, namely, they continue to centre on role playing. In inventing various subjects for games (in playing "store", "hospital", "mommy") a child easily shifts from one role to another (from that of the mommy to that of a daughter, from a salesperson to a client, a patient to a doctor), assimilating not only the object-related field of mutual relations but also the character of the relations of adult persons with regard to the given object sphere. For it is the mother that feeds the daughter and not vice versa, the salesperson sells goods while the customer buys them—never vice versa. And children rigorously comply with the rules of the game, for even though it is a game it is also a very serious matter, as much as the actual cooking of food or the actual shopping. The roles that a child can play within the course of a day can be quite numerous: he can be a member of a polar expedition, sell ice-cream, be a taxi driver, a janitor, a farmer, a soldier, a pilot—anything he wishes or, more precisely, anything to which his playmates will agree.

In short, playing is in effect a new and very bold step in gaining knowledge of the overall set of interpersonal relations, the first most general stage in professional orientation and at the same time an important stage in gaining knowledge of one's own self. To a child games open up the most unexpected traits of his personality. It would seem that the attitude a child has in playing a game, namely, that he can do anything he wishes, exerts substantial influence on the development of his actual capabilities. Let us consider the following example. It is well known that children do not like and often are unable to perform elementary chores in looking after themselves, for example, they may not be able to dress without the help of adults. In a game, however, often to the great surprise of his parents, a child may dress himself quickly. Or consider still another example. It is well known that small children find it difficult to sit still and neither threats nor enticements can cause them to remain still for even a short time. Psychological research have shown persuasively that in the context of a game a child (if that is his role) can remain "at his station" for hours. When engaged in play a child acquires an ability for autonomous activities and self-regulation whose importance in further psychological development is obvious. It is significant that schoolchildren in their first year, unlike preschool-age children, can sit still for an entire class hour only with the greatest difficulty even though they are psychologically more developed than the latter. The reason is simply that they are not in a situation in which they are playing a game but are engaged in the actual role of schoolchildren and accordingly are deprived of the specific "adaptation" (in the vocabulary of Stanislavsky's theatrical school) that helps them in performing their role in accordance with the scenario of school life.

In short, it is difficult to overestimate the importance of games in a child's psychological development. Games develop a child's memory, perception, will, thinking, and imagination. By assimilating in conventional-play form man's object world and that of his social relations, it makes it possible for the child to achieve substantial progress in developing his own psychological functions. He develops an ability to rely on symbolic substitutions and autonomous forms of behaviour. He has grown, gained in strength, and has become physically developed. He has gained a great-

er understanding especially of the fact that of all the equally fascinating forms of social existence, his immediate future has in store for him the specific role of a school student as his first socially important and socially valued form of activity. In connection with their advances in general psychological development, children who are 6-7 years old express a clearly marked striving to assume a new and more "adult" position in life and perform a new activity that is important not only for themselves but also for persons in their environment. It is this striving that brings the child into conflict with the structuring of his own life that at the preceding stage constituted the primary meaning of his activities. Games cease to satisfy him. In resolving this conflict, the child enters into a crisis stage of development that is described in psychological literature as the "crisis of 7-year-olds". The basic meaning of that crisis, which manifests itself in a child's behaviour in the form of capriciousness, negativism and disobedience, is an attempt to realize a newly emerged need to exceed the framework of a child's way of life, to occupy a new position in social life accessible to a child and carry out a serious, socially significant type of activity. Research findings show that at the age of 6-7 years literally all children want very much to go to school and rebel against the social order of kindergarten life and are greatly attached to various attributes of school-children (book satchels, uniforms). There is only one way to resolve the crisis, and that is, through the transition to school life. It is important, however, that this transition express an actual need on the part of a child. It has been noted that children who have not completed the game-playing phase are indifferent to school learning and resist it and that they experience the crisis phenomena of that age in a more intense form. However, by the age of 6-7 years most children are ready for learning in a school environment. Games must yield to a new form of activity—learning.

The Child Learns to Learn

Before the eighteenth century, in Russia the new year began on the first of September as was the practice in Byzantium from where the Julian calendar and Christianity came to Russia. From 1708, following an edict of Peter the

Great, each new year began on the first of January, as is the practice today. In only one sphere of our social life did the first of September retain its significance as the beginning of a new year, that of a new school year.

According to a long-established tradition, on the first of September the streets of cities and villages in the Soviet Union are filled with children wearing smart school uniforms, carrying flowers and hurrying to school to participate in the festivities of the first school bell. Among them the youngest, those entering the first grade, are especially noticeable. This is not only because unlike older children they are accompanied by their parents, and not only because of their large bouquets and book satchels which sometimes equal their own size, but because of their expression of eagerness and excitement—they are going to school for the first time.

The beginning of learning in school is accompanied by a change in the entire structure of a child's life. It represents a fundamentally new social situation for personality development.

First, the child begins to carry out a socially important activity—he learns. And the importance of that activity is evaluated by the persons around him in a corresponding manner: while a child's parents could interrupt games at any moment if they felt it was time to eat or that the child had already played too much, in the case of such an activity as "doing home assignments" the attitude of adults is one of respect. Learning activity possesses a clearly expressed social significance and accordingly place a child objectively in a new position in relation to adults and peers; it alters their own evaluation of themselves and restructures in a specific manner mutual relations within the family. Daniil Elkonin observes that it is precisely because learning activities are social in terms of their contents (they are concerned with the assimilation of the treasures of culture and science accumulated by mankind), social in terms of its meaning (it is socially significant and socially evaluated) and also social in terms of its implementation (it is carried out in accordance with socially formulated norms), it plays a leading role in the first years of school, that is, during the period in which it originally takes shape. In short, the transition to school life is marked primarily by a shift to a new type of dominant activity.

Secondly, school life calls for a systematic and mandatory fulfillment of a number of rules that apply to everyone and which govern the behaviour of children in school. The child's relations to teachers differ greatly from the personal and intimate relation of children with their parents or with kindergarten supervisors. Relations between children and their teachers are rigorously subordinated to the specific character of their joint-divided activities and by the organizational principles of school life. A subordination to these rules requires that the child be able to regulate his own behaviour and defines important requirements relating to his productive activities and ability to relate them to consciously established goals.

With regard to these characteristics of school education, Hegel observed that

"Children's peculiarities can be tolerated within the family circle; but from the moment they enter school a life begins that conforms to a general order and to a rule that is the same for all; at that point the spirit must be brought to abandon its vagaries, to know and desire the general and to assimilate existing general education. It is such a transformation of the soul that is called education. The more a person is educated the less elements that are peculiar to him alone and that are therefore accidental are evident in his behaviour."¹

Finally, systematic learning in school is associated with the task of mastering the fundamentals of sciences, scientific modes of thinking and science's specific logic, which differs from the sum of everyday conceptions that have been developed by a seven-year-old child. These scientific concepts that a child assimilates in school differ from everyday conceptions above all in that they provide a scientific picture of the world as seen from an objective social position. Earlier perceptions based primarily on his senses and recorded in thought in a purely empirical manner—as an object with a given set of attributes—must now be subjected to scientific analysis, i.e., be placed in the context of objective cognition. Hegel noted that

"already in ancient times children were not allowed to remain too long in the field of sensuous

¹ G. W. F. Hegel, *System der Philosophie*, p. 88.

perception. But the spirit of modern times also raises itself in an altogether different way over the sensory sphere and enters into its own world much more deeply than did the ancient spirit. This is why in our times the super-sensory world should become close to a boy's conceptions at an early time. School contributes to this much more than does the family. Within the latter a child is valued for his direct uniqueness, he is loved independently of whether his behaviour is good or bad. Conversely, in school a child's spontaneity loses its significance; there he is recognized only to the extent that he possesses a specific value, that he advances in some respect; there he is not only loved, but in accordance with general norms he is criticized and guided, he is given an education in conformity with rigorous rules and with the help of specific subjects of learning and is generally subordinated to a specific order that forbids much that is harmless in itself simply because one cannot allow everyone to do it. In this way school represents a certain transition from family life to civic society.¹

Let us note in particular the importance of a transition from a direct sensory perception of the world to a super-sensory perception, i.e., one that is expressed in terms of abstract concepts. In learning activities a child operates with scientific concepts under the guidance of a teacher and assimilates them. Such activities produce changes not in the sphere of science, for a child does not extend the scope of scientific knowledge, but in the child's personality, contributing to the development of his abilities, particularly his capacity to engage in generalized actions in the sphere of scientific concepts. In the context of learning activities which defines the specific character of the overall life of elementary school children, they acquire and develop the basic elements of a theoretical attitude towards reality, an ability to orient themselves in theoretical forms of human activity and to operate in terms of abstract concepts. This is the principal new psychological formation of the age group in question.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

We have listed the more important changes in personality activities and its psychological structure that take place in connection with the beginning of school learning. Of course our exposition describes a certain ideal variant of such a development. As a rule a multiplicity of problems arise in concrete situations of school learning that we are deliberately neglecting here. They include difficulties in the establishment of stable mutual relations with teachers and peers, problems of adjusting to the demands of discipline and to the specific system of evaluation of academic achievement or possible loss of interest in learning. In our present study we wish to define in the most general way the place of the elementary school age in personality development and accordingly, rather than analyzing the nature of school life in detail, we will turn once more to our main theme, namely, the nature of the basic course of personality development.

Elementary-school age (seven to eleven years) represents a special stage in man's individuation. The spiritual world of preschool age children is based on information; that of a child of elementary school age represents the beginning of a process of "ascending towards concepts", which is the next step in the child's individuation and marks his emergence as a thinking being, his advance towards the subjectiveness of a thinking person that expresses an objective scientific world view. This also defines the principal meaning of learning—a transition from sensuous perception to abstract thinking. Having mastered the process of forming abstractions, which is the most powerful instrument of human cognition, a child acquires the capacity to assimilate a large store of scientific knowledge, to widen his concept of the world and in this way to prepare himself theoretically for future actions in the world of objects and relations. Still another reason why mastering modes of scientific activity is so important is that at later, ontogenetically more advanced stages of development, when other needs and interests will dominate his activities, an ability to learn will be needed to further add to the child's existing knowledge. In this sense learning is a universal form of human activity (as is playing, work, and social communication).

Now the child has learned to study. He has already spent 3-4 years in school and school life has ceased to be viewed as something new. A new school subject is no longer

felt to be something novel but is simply a matter of routine. The child has become accustomed to school and his relations with teachers and peers have become established. His assimilation of the rich legacies of human knowledge is proceeding intensively. In our ideal model everything seems to proceed normally. Yet we know that this is the calm before the storm. For childhood is ending and a transitional period can be discerned in personality development—that of adolescence with its specific difficulties. How does personality development proceed after childhood? We shall consider this in the next chapter.

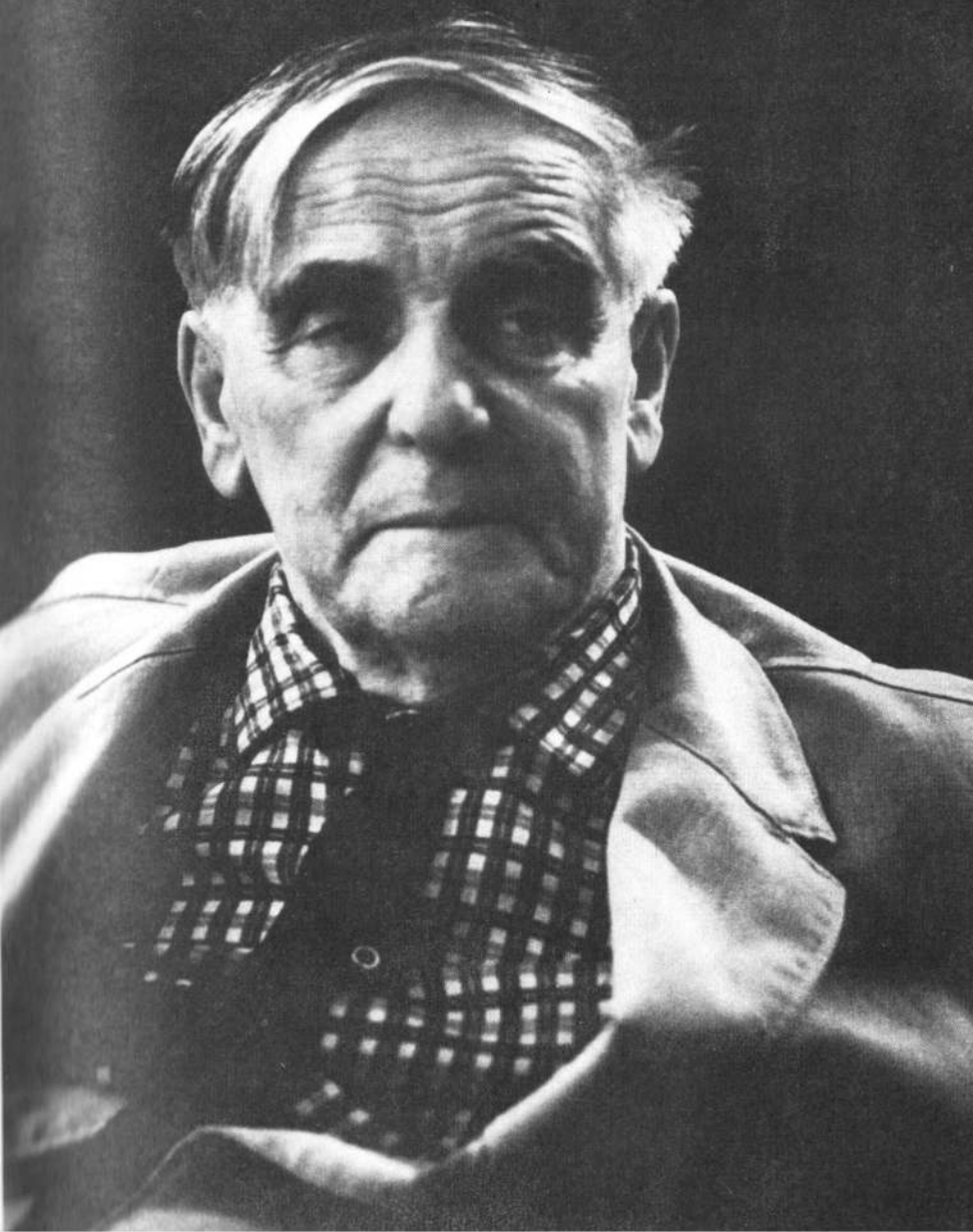
Captions

1. The joy of childhood
2. Learning craftsmanship (V. Pushkarev,
a worker and Deputy to the Supreme
Soviet of the USSR with an apprentice)
3. The wisdom of age (Academician
Pyotr Kapitsa)
4. On the threshold of adolescence
5. Talent and age (the Georgian People's
Artist of the USSR, Martiros Saryan)
6. The mirror of age (the Georgian artist
Mikhail Chavchavadze)
7. The height of one's career (the surgeon
Vyacheslav Frantsev)
8. The age of triumphs (three times
Olympic champion Viktor Saneyev)
9. Maturity (the artist and blacksmith
Vsevolod Smirnov)

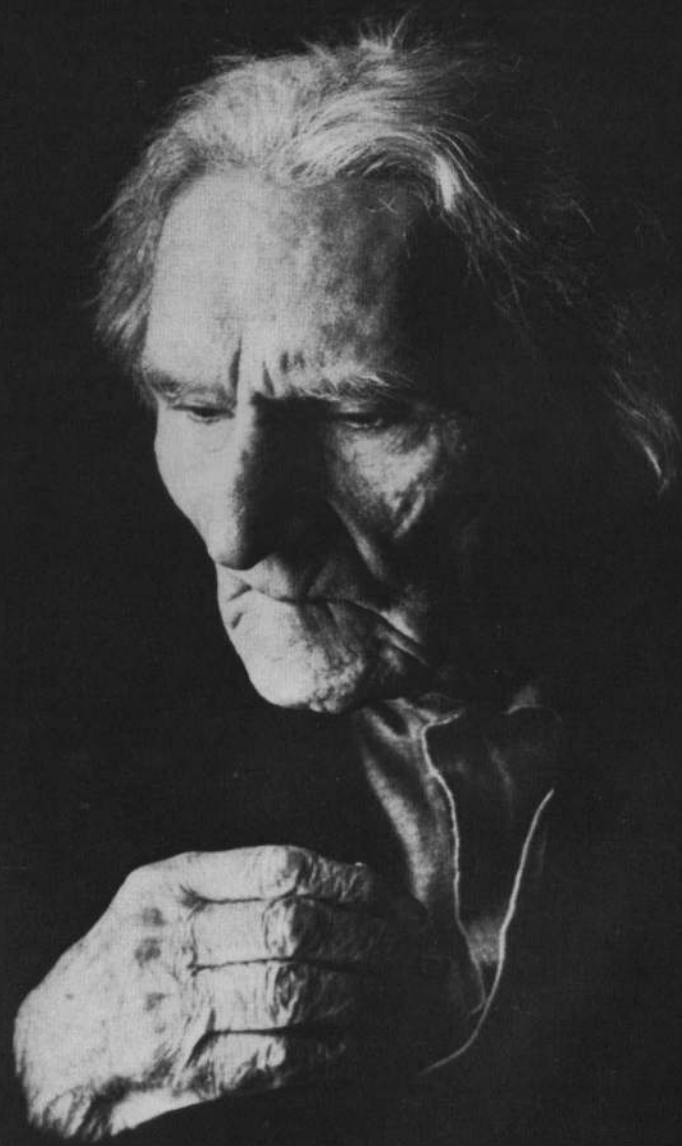
Photos by *Yuri Rost*

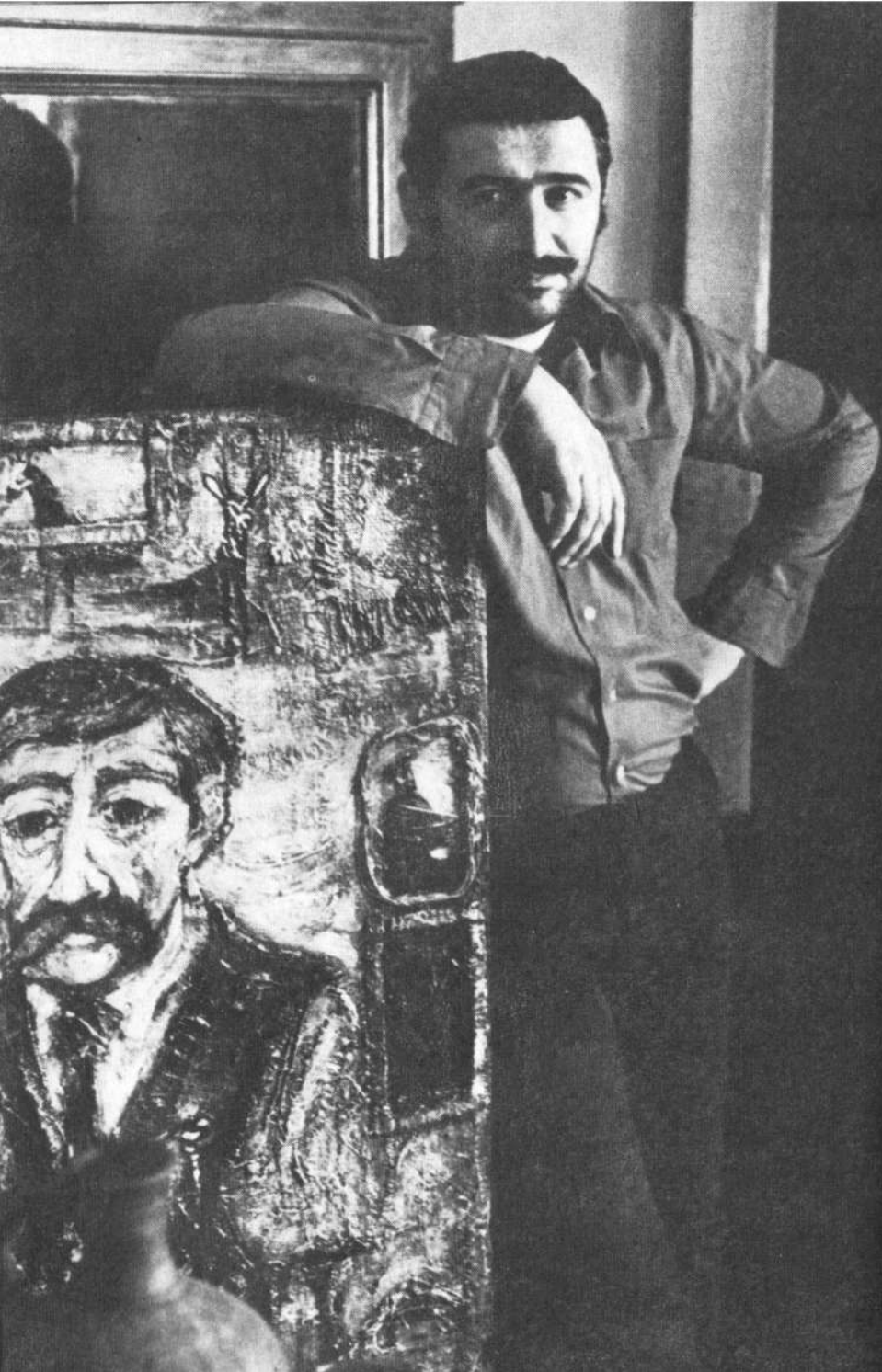


















CHAPTER 4

AFTER CHILDHOOD

“...We all know the vast scope of adolescence. Subsequently no matter how many additional decades may have gone past they can never fill the hangar into which they fly as reminiscences, individually and in groups, in daytime and at night, like training planes in need of additional fuel. In other words these years of our lives form a part that is larger than the whole, and Faust who experienced them twice, lived through something that is entirely unimaginable and can only be compared to a mathematical paradox.”

Boris Pasternak

The Adolescent's World

Was Adolescence Always a Difficult Age?

The Age of the Cherubino

A Weakness of Will or of Objectives?

In Praise of Fantasy

*The First Duty of a Young Man Embarking Upon
His Own Life Path*

Choosing a Profession Is Choosing One's Way of Life

The Adolescent's World

The literal meaning of the Russian word for adolescent (*podrostok*), is, according to Vladimir Dahl's famous dictionary "a child in the process of growth". But is this all? Probably not, since one cannot explain in terms of difficulties attributed to growth alone the contradictions and problems that mark personality development following childhood and which produce so much anxiety and concern among adults as well as among the adolescents themselves.

The formula "no longer a child—not yet an adult" vividly expresses the transitional character of adolescent life. For adolescence is a state of personality in which the individual has already broken with the happy age of childhood, but has not yet found himself in adult life, has not yet become a mature personality characterized by a corresponding way of life and form of activity. An adolescent's life is always on the threshold of something that is vanishing forever (childhood) and the expected future (adulthood). This is why the adolescent's mind is confused, for he feels his position in the world as well as the world in himself primary as a conception, as an ideal for his existence lying outside the parameters of his immediate vital activities. He fails to see what is evident, as it were, namely, that in reality he is happy, since he lives a full and energetic life, his body is in a state of great vitality and his spirit is able to engage in lofty actions—in heroic deeds, selfless service to a cause and self-sacrifice for the sake of another.

The age of adolescence is marked by psychological manifestations that have caused it to be described as "difficult", "an age of crisis", and an "age of transition". Its specific characteristics are well-known and have been amply described in psychological studies: adolescents become capricious, they cease to be satisfied with tasks and strivings that constituted the meaning of their activity at an earlier age (childhood); their attitude to these values become nihilistic; a number of psychological formations that are vitally important for early school years such as a desire to study and to discipline oneself vanish; "unexplainable" acts occur,

often in the form of inadequate behaviour and occasionally characterized by a loss of temper resulting from an inability to adjust to new conditions. Lev Vygotsky describes that phenomenon as a crisis of psychological development noting that this "pan-nihilism" and desperate destructiveness can be reduced to psychologically acceptable forms (that do not produce delays in psychological development) and that may be controlled, within limits, through pedagogical influences. It is also his view that under certain conditions such a crisis in psychological development is an entirely positive phenomenon that can provide a new impulse to psychological development. Its foundations, however, should be sought not in the crisis itself but rather in the character and organization of activities of adolescents from which it derives.

It is precisely the character and organization of activities of adolescents (together with certain other aspects) that Soviet psychologists describe as a new social situation of development which leads to the appearance of new psychological formations during that age. The major ones are well known: a striving to establish "one's place" within a collective of peers, a desire to win authority and the recognition of one's friends, a sensitivity to the demands of a collective and its opinion, closer attention and higher demands made on oneself, a great deal of social activity, a striving to be "adult", etc. In short, an in-depth portrayal of the psychological characteristics of adolescence has been made in Soviet psychology that makes it possible to view it as a specific spiritual world and personality state that differs qualitatively from other ages and periods of human development.

Was Adolescence Always a "Difficult" Age?

Today's adolescents are often described as "difficult". But as Voltaire had once wittily remarked, "the adjective is an enemy of the noun". In short, the fact that we describe something as "difficult" does not explain anything. It is therefore useful to consider the more precise nature of the "difficulties" of the age of adolescence.

We believe that an abstract consideration of that ques-

tion would yield very little. In literally all ages adults have addressed a specific set of accusations against the new generation and have found a vast number of shortcomings in young people, but this was primarily the grumbling of the old before the new whose only fault was that it did not resemble the old. We are inclined to view the resulting tendency to interpret adolescence as a "difficult" age as a prejudice of the type that abounds in the psychology of everyday life. But how should we view the numerous scientific theories of adolescence created by bourgeois scientists in the twentieth century alone? In these theories the nature of the difficulties that distinguish adolescence are defined in a relatively specific way.

Consider only some of these points of view.

According to one, an adolescent is merely a savage because of his boundless imagination, his rashness, liveliness, craftiness, forgetfulness, inconsistency, curiosity, explosive temper and lack of cares. According to another, an adolescent is a madman in view of his inclination towards superstitions, illusions to the point of hallucinations, pride and extreme sensitivity concerning one's honour, endless flow of words that resemble the ravings of an insane person, proclivity for unmotivated acts, grumbling, mimicking and teasing. It has been asserted that an adolescent is a potential criminal in view of his fits of rage, deceit, cruelty, extreme vanity and egoism, a tendency towards alcoholism and moral degradation. Finally, in the case of Sigmund Freud as well, the adolescent appears as a pan-sexual being, almost a maniac.

In short, the gloomy picture that is so characteristic of current bourgeois thought, one which is marred by deep social pessimism and lack of faith in man's creative and constructive potential, portrays a savage, a madman, criminal, and sexual maniac. It is not only in Western science but also in its art that we find numerous attempts to affirm the deeply wicked nature of human beings whose roots originate in childhood, adolescence and young adulthood. Let us mention a few examples whose artistic merits vary considerably but that express a common view in asserting the inherent depravity of childhood: William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, Ray Bradbury's *Veldt* and *Zero Hour* and W. Blatty's *The Exorcist*. In the works of the most progressive writers such as Ernest Hemingway, William Faul-

kner and Thomas Wolfe as well as those of William Golding and Ray Bradbury, the pessimistic view of adolescence is in effect a reflection of the present bourgeois world in which they live and of the tragic fate of children and adolescents in today's world riddled with crime, corruption, and moral degradation.

One cannot ignore the fact that the life of adolescents contains many contradictions whose expression provides grounds, at first sight, for many different views concerning the essence of adolescence, including those that we have described above. It is true in fact that one can see much in the psychological structure of an adolescent to validate the aforementioned approaches: a turbulent imagination can be seen as an attribute of savagery, a tendency towards unmotivated acts as an absence of sanity, disorderliness as a sign of criminal drives and approaching sexual maturity as pan-sexuality. But there arises a question: is it legitimate to absolutize individual manifestations of adolescence and to overemphasize them to the point of absurdity, thus transforming a norm into a pathology? For it is also possible to "sketch" a completely opposite image of an "angelic" creature striving towards an ideal, an individual sensitive in his emotions, sentimental, and vulnerable (for these traits are just as characteristic of adolescence as those mentioned earlier). But why replace one abstraction with another? For both "angels" and "devils" are equally uncomfortable in human life—they are too one-sided, one-dimensional and too simple to be able to characterize the full complexity of human personality. This is why we will follow the course marked earlier—that of a cultural-historical analysis—and consider actual changes in the social situation governing the development of adolescents in the USSR in seeking to understand the essence of the difficulties of adolescence and their current manifestations.

Of course the very first task encountered by the Soviet government in the field of education was to overcome the mass illiteracy that was inherited from Russia's tsarist regime. At that time education for various age groups of the population (including adolescents) was simply concerned with teaching reading, writing and arithmetic.

Lenin associated the teaching of literacy with the need of broad strata of the population to participate in political life. "An illiterate person stands outside politics, he must

first learn his ABC's."¹

This task was solved by elementary education, whose objective was to provide basic literacy and in this way to develop the socio-psychological prerequisites for the population's participation in relatively skilled types of labour and its conscious involvement in socio-political life. In short, this was a programme for developing literate and cultured Soviet workers.

In the 1920s and 1930s adolescents were largely adolescent workers. At that time the transition from childhood to adulthood took place much earlier than today. The place of adolescents in social life was determined by the fact that under the then economic conditions they were forming part of the country's "labour resources" rather than its "labour reserves". Accordingly, the psychology of adolescents at that time was that of working persons.

This was well understood by psychologists in the 1920s and 1930s. The main point that they observed was the distinction between a bourgeois and a working adolescent. Lev Vygotsky wrote that the overwhelming majority of observations and factual data relating to the transitional age (adulthood) that served as a basis for the traditional theory concerning that age related entirely to studies of adolescents from the upper classes of society; studies of adolescent workers were negligible and there were none of the peasants. Even such prominent representatives of Western psychology as Eduard Spranger realized that it was impossible to develop a general teaching concerning all adolescents, and psychologists began to consciously limit their task to studies of bourgeois adolescents in specific countries.

Studies carried out by Soviet psychologists in the 1920s and 1930s established that the very type of development of bourgeois and worker adolescents differed greatly. A distinguishing feature of worker adolescents was that they had to work in order to live. For them this was a fundamental vital requirement, or rather an entire constellation of vital requirements that were accorded priority. The need to provide for their existence, to work in order to eat was a dominant one that came to be recognized precisely during the

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The New Economic Policy and the Tasks of the Political Education Departments", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1973, p. 78.

age of transition. This is why adolescent workers often passed through a shortened path of cultural ripening and their young years were often suppressed, stifled and pale or as noted by Pavel Blonsky, they often were deprived of an adolescence altogether, that highest period of cultural development. Adolescence is a late acquisition of humanity; it varies greatly, is unstable and inconstant.

In the 1920s and 1930s, in short, one could only consider the need for defining the adolescent age for the entire mass of the population in the USSR. This process was directly associated with the further development of education and began in the late 1930s. It was completed in the late 1950s through the establishment of a universal eight-year education (incomplete secondary) in 1958. By that time a system of social education—pre-school (to the age of 7) and school-based (to the age of 15)—was established on a mass social scale. In particular this meant that in the USSR the age of adolescence came to be associated with the school period.

An adolescent's life was now spent in acquiring an education and gaining an understanding of the fundamentals of science. It is at this point that the history of the present adolescent age in the Soviet Union begins.

The emergence and wide acceptance of the age of adolescence as a school age has radically altered the position of adolescents within the system of social relations. Henceforth adolescents are students. Accordingly, social requirements relating to the contents of personality development in that age have been altered. In a developed socialist society the system of social education is based on the need to develop in adolescents personality qualities (needs and motivations) that make it possible for them to become actively engaged in social production and civic life. Major qualities of this type include: 1) the need to work, ability to work and work habits that make it possible to readily engage in any socially significant form of activity, to acquire a specific profession, organize rationally and, when necessary, improve creatively one's conditions and instruments of work; 2) the ability to make use of basic forms and means of social communication in various collectives on the basis of advanced moral and social ideals; 3) the ability to form scientific, artistic, moral, and legal view-points which constitute a basis of a scientific world view.

At the same time one should not consider the realization of these tasks as something "automatic" that simply requires the relevant "pedagogical techniques and equipment". It is important to consider the way in which these current tasks facing adolescents are related to the real psychological characteristics of today's youth. It is our view that many of the difficulties of today's adolescents are the result of the complex social situation within which they develop.

Today, as a result of the studies of Soviet psychologists in the field of pedagogical psychology (those of Vassily Davydov and Daniil Elkonin), it has become evident that the foundations of an individual's social consciousness (scientific, artistic, moral, legal and others) can and must be developed already in early school years. The experimental studies of Vassily Davydov and his associates show that such changes in the contents of teaching activities in elementary school contribute to the development in young children of an autonomy of psychological processes, ability to plan their actions and reflection concerning one's own mode of behaviour, in short, of capacities that were traditionally associated with adolescence. One should add that our elementary schools today are not yet capable of completely fulfilling this task although improvements in elementary education seek to overcome this shortcoming. If one accepts these propositions, which are neither illogical nor unsupported by experimental findings, the following question arises: what is then the dominant activity of adolescents in social conditions where the basic forms of teaching are already focused on elementary schools?

Changes in the dominant activity of adolescents (which cannot be reduced to academic tasks alone) were already noted in the 1960s. In particular, Tatiana Dragunova and Daniil Elkonin established in a specialized study that a specific activity concerning the development of intimate personal relations among adolescents emerges and develops during this age. This activity has been described as one of interpersonal communication. A characteristic feature of this activity is that in terms of its contents it represents a specific form of reproducing in relations among adolescents relations that exist among adults. In the course of that social communication a "testing" and "probing" takes place as well as an intense exploration and acquisition of corresponding norms. According to Elkonin general attitudes to-

wards life and relations among persons as well as those concerning one's own future develop within such interpersonal communication as does a personalized meaning of life. As a result self-awareness is developed as "interiorized social consciousness" (Vygotsky). Dragunova believes that the central new formation of adolescence is a sense of adulthood in the form of regarding oneself as an adult, with a striving to be considered an adult by others that is expressed in imitations of various aspects of adulthood and in other phenomena of adolescence (we will return to this topic later).

In short, studies have shown that the age of adolescence may not be reduced to the problems of learning activity but rather is a period in which norms and modes of social communication are developed. David Feldshtein has added an important point to these views, namely, that the dominant activity of adolescents is social communication within a system of socially useful activity (labour, artistic, socio-organizational, sports, teaching, etc.). He stresses that the principal condition for personality development in adolescence is a free transition from one form of socially useful activity to others. Such an approach makes it possible to construct the process of education and training in ways that are maximally effective from the point of view of possibilities for personality development, i.e. it contributes to the purposeful formation among schoolchildren of conscious regulation of their acts, and an ability to take into consideration the feelings, interests, and wishes of other persons and orient oneself towards them in one's own behaviour. Unfortunately, it must be recognized that the present organization of school life does not yet always provide for such a dominant activity in adolescence and that this is a major cause for the "difficulties" and conflicts between adults and adolescents. It may thus be clearly seen that attempts to "simply" assign adolescents to learning and to require obedience and discipline as in the case of junior students will inevitably fail, for they do not take into consideration the specific characteristics of today's age of adolescence and its specific psychological organization.

The Age of the Cherubino

One autumn at Boldino, Alexander Pushkin, Russia's greatest poet, wrote "The Page of 15 Years Old" at a mo-

ment of great creative inspiration, apparently under the influence of memories of his adolescence, of the years in the Lyceum when he himself was as merry and mischievous as a 15-year-old cherub. Here are its opening lines:

*I'll be fifteen, and soon—a man!
The very thought of it delights me.
But even now none dares to slight me,
To look with scorn at me, none can
Treat me disdainfully or lightly.
I am no pink-cheeked, smiling laddie,
I've sprouted a moustache already,
A gaffer's mien is mine—it's proud,
My voice is gruff and also loud,
And for a fight I'm always ready.¹*

The Cherubino type, popular in 18th-century literature, symbolizes a specific moment in human development, namely, the transition of a child to an adult, of a boy to a man, and expresses the state of a specific period characterized by first love, the awakening sexuality, a time when the first traits of a grown man's psychology begin to appear behind the puffy beardless cheeks and outwardly feminine appearance of adolescent boys.

Today adolescents little resemble this famous literary figure, partly because they mature earlier (acceleration) while their external appearance is made more manly and less delicate and feminine by sports and education.

Physiologically today's adolescent boys and girls are relatively well defined with regard to their sexual gender, and in modern literature, for example, we no longer find the once popular theme of Baroque novels of the early 17th century where a quick change from male garb into a woman's dress and vice versa was an important part of many entertaining adventures. At the same time the specific trait of adolescent psychology that is symbolized by Cherubino continues to represent even today a significant threshold in the transition from childhood to adulthood. We will therefore examine it.

In earlier times the beginning of sexual maturity marked the end of childhood and the adolescent's transition to adult life. The ancients viewed the beginning of sexual maturity as sufficient grounds for recognizing a person ap-

¹ Translated by Irina Zheleznova.

proaching adulthood as fit for the burdens of military service, family life, and gradual engagement in social institutions. The adolescent was subjected to some initiation rituals after which he could immediately begin to perform his social and civic duties. The situation is different today. While the beginning of sexual maturity is relatively visible (in particular in terms of purely external characteristics and somatic changes, not to mention physiological ones relating to the corresponding organs), it does not acquire clearly distinct form in the adolescent's and young adult's personality development. The beginning of sexual maturity occurs at substantially different times for girls and boys and in addition significant variations occur within a given sex. The adolescent continues to be a student just as earlier and materially dependent on his family and does not possess civic rights. A certain non-correlation develops between his purely physiological readiness to conduct family life and his actual status as a child. Moreover, physiological development does not yet mark the advent of the organism's overall organic maturity (growth continues), and accordingly not only socially but also physiologically, sexual activity and the bearing of children is not recommended.

Lev Vygotsky considered the situation the most important contradiction of the age of adolescence and presented it graphically as a triangle whose vertices represent the beginning of sexual maturity, overall organic development and social maturity. Their non-correlation in time defines the particular point where the developing personality finds itself. While in earlier historical ages the beginning of sexual maturity marked the termination of a person's growth and development, today it is an intermediate point of man's development that in many respects precedes overall organic maturity and social, civic and moral maturity.

This is the source of numerous problems of the adolescent age, both purely pedagogic (the structuring of the educational process during early stages of puberty and following its completion under conditions marked by a strong mutual attraction between the sexes) and psychological, for purely organic causes result (even though they do not directly determine) in significant psychological personality changes. In Soviet psychological literature these psychological changes of the age of adolescence have

been described as a sense of adulthood.¹ This is a new psychological formation expressing the specific social development situation in adolescence. The specific social activity of adolescents consists in the perception and assimilation of norms, values and modes of behaviour of the world of adults and their relations. This path, however, is not without difficulties deriving from certain specific features of adolescent personalities.

A Weakness of Will or of Objectives?

In one of the concluding sections of his *Critique of Pure Reason*, Immanuel Kant formulated three famous questions that encompassed, in his view, all of man's spiritual interests: What can I know? What must I do? What do I dare hope? Psychologists writing today and relying on currently accepted scientific terminology would not fail to note that Kant considered the problem of motivations for human activities a central one in the development of man's spiritual interests.

This is deeply true in a certain sense, and today's psychology assigns a leading role in personality development to the problem of motivations: why does an adolescent perform particular activities? To what extent is he aware of the motivations that led him to carry out a certain act? Is he able to define a specific objective for himself and carry out his intentions? What strivings and interests are the most important for adolescents? These and many other questions relate to the field of behaviour motivation.

One may distinguish several lines of development of man's motivational sphere: 1) the development of existing motivations and the appearance of new ones; 2) changes in structural relations among various motivations which centre on the establishment of a stable motivational hierarchy as some motives become dominant and others move into the background; the emergence of specific directions followed by the individual; 3) changes in the relationship between the motivational sphere (emotions and needs) and the intellectual sphere. At the level of motivations this is revealed

¹ A. V. Petrovski, (Ed.), *Age-Group and Pedagogical Psychology*, Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1984.

in the fact that in the course of a child's development his needs become mediated; there occurs a transition from "reactive" behaviour to behaviour that is mediated by a conscious definition of goals and intentions, i.e., by conscious and autonomous behaviour.

It is appropriate to emphasize this last point, for to understand the distinct characteristics of specifically human motivation implies an understanding of man's behaviour in accordance with consciously defined objectives.

Speaking in the most general terms about the development of goal definition in man's ontogenesis, it may be described as a transition from an inability to perform actions corresponding to a certain consciously defined objective to the achievement of objectives defined by adults and finally to the definition by man of his own objectives.

A capacity for autonomous action, for acts possessing consciously defined objectives emerges in children already at the preschool age. And adults, as a rule, seek to find for children such types of activities that lend themselves best to autonomous actions. For example, a child who "cannot" dress himself when asked by an adult, easily accomplishes this task and even does it with pleasure when playing a "dressing game".

In school the presence of discipline and the need to rigorously adhere to rules that govern the behaviour of students as well as the regular character of learning assignments places children in a situation that is much more difficult and makes great demands precisely for autonomous behaviour and the ability to carry out assigned tasks consciously. In school, actions responding to direct motivation may be altogether inappropriate.

Schoolchildren in elementary classes must submit to having the assignments and objectives of their actions defined primarily by teachers and parents. And the child must be able to carry out the assignments of adults and achieve the defined objectives. Not all children entering their first year at school prove to be prepared for this. Situations often arise where a child faces the need to carry out one objective while he himself wishes to do something else, and he is unable, moreover, to resist his direct motivation. Accordingly, the basic characteristic of motivational development in early school years is the development of an ability to act in accordance with a defined objective and to subor-

dinate other immediate wishes to this.

In effect—and this should be emphasized—this concerns the development of will-governed behaviour, which may be defined psychologically as behaviour in situations of conflict between motivational tendencies running in different directions, where one tendency is perceived as more valuable (a consciously adopted objective), the other is perceived as emotionally more attractive, and where the former overcomes the latter. The following is a typical example of a situation calling for will-governed behaviour: a child must solve a mathematical problem and views this task as important and dominant for himself at the given moment, but at the same time he wishes to watch an interesting film or hockey match on television.

Traditionally the problem of will-governed behaviour is associated with the age of adolescence. This is partly justified. But it is important to stress that in the case of adolescents it is the problem of an autonomous definition of one's goal that moves to the foreground rather than of actions to carry out an already adopted decision. Vygotsky noted that it is not a weakness of will that explained many difficulties of the age of adolescence but rather a weakness of objectives.

Let us consider this more closely. Indeed, in a certain sense the process of personality development may be viewed as the development of will. Primary emphasis, however, is then placed on manifestations of personality. For like other new psychological formations, will develops in man in the course of his psychological development and passes through a number of stages. It is true that one cannot speak of an individual's personality without noting an ability to express will. Yet, the reverse is also true: one cannot refer to will-governed behaviour independently of personality. As a result, when we speak of insufficient will among adolescents there is a danger of confusing cause and effect.

This is precisely the point that was noted by Vygotsky: is not the weakness of will that we observe simply a weakness of reference goals among adolescents?

Let us consider this.

Earlier, in considering theoretical models of the biogenetic and socio-genetic trends in psychology we already noted that both of these points of view assigned to personality the role of a passive object of changes, subject to the influence of either hereditary or else environmental factors. That

discussion should be continued in the following context. Both approaches recognize only one way of explaining human consciousness and behaviour, namely, the establishment of causal relations.

That proposition, however, which originates in the general methodology of the natural sciences, does not consider the fact that the establishment of causal relations covers only one aspect of human development. An equally important role in the development of human behaviour is played by a capacity for goal definition. This is why in noting the actual dependence of man's activities on the past (causal determination) one cannot neglect the other side, namely, their relation to the future (goal determination). For as an ideal image of the future and a picture of what must be a goal determines the present and governs the actions of the individual and his state.

In that connection, Leontiev has cited in one of his works a folk saying that he heard in the Urals: when a horse following a difficult path begins to stumble, instead of urging it on with a whip one should raise its head higher so that it may see further ahead. Likewise, many adolescents' difficulties may, perhaps, be attributed to their limited field of vision.

It is appropriate to recall the thought of Anton Makarenko, a Soviet pedagogue, concerning the role of a system of long-term objectives. In Makarenko's view, to rear a person was the same as cultivating within him a long-term perspective.

"A person who determines his behaviour in terms of immediate perspective is the weakest of men. If he is content with merely his own prospects, even though the latter may be distant, he may appear to be strong, but this does not produce in us a sense of beauty and of the true value of the personality. The wider the collective whose perspective is also that of its members, the more beautiful and noble the individuals will be."¹

Makarenko saw a basis for combining the daily practical activities of adolescents with ideals in combining short-term, medium-term, and long-term perspective.

One can thus speak of the leading role of goal definition

¹ A. S. Makarenko, "Obshchiye voprosy teorii pedagogiki. Vospitaniye v Sovetskoi shkole". (General Questions of Pedagogical Theory. Education in Soviet Schools), *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, Moscow, the USSR Academy of Pedagogical Sciences, 1958, p. 74.

in the development of the human personality. This is why it is important to establish precisely why the question of objectives in activities become particularly important in the age of adolescence.

The reason lies, above all, in changes in the sphere of the individual's vital activities during his transition from childhood to adolescence. In childhood the individual lives within a continually expanding system of relations with the world. While in preschool days the basic sphere of his social relations is provided by the family and a small group of adults and peers, in school the range of social relations widens considerably. Initially, however, these changes are primarily of a quantitative nature. Qualitative changes, on the other hand, take place in the course of the transition to adolescence. At that time the widening scope of social communication is attended by the change of its role in personality development, namely, by the fact that it may be viewed as an evolverment of the person's social essence. Let us explain this more clearly.

In adolescence the autonomous value of relations within an intimate circle of relations (the family, the class) is lost. But this only applies to their autonomous value. This means that the expectations of the closest adults (parents, teachers) and of peers continue to be meaningful only so long as they are included in a wider sphere of social motivation, i.e., so long as these expectations derive from the needs of social development.¹

This was well noted by Vasily Sukhomlinsky, a Soviet educator, as he considered the nature of the "psychological rebelliousness" of adolescents and their lack of responsiveness to educational efforts:

"Adolescents seek to be good, they strive towards an ideal and at the same time they do not like to be taught and have a strong distaste for the 'nakedness' of ideas and tendencies that sometimes turns into a truly disastrous feature of education in schools."²

¹ See A. N. Leontiev, *Deyatel'nost', Soznaniye, Lichnost* (Activity, Awareness, Personality), Moscow, Politizdat Publishers, 1975, p. 213.

² See V. A. Sukhomlinsky, *Rozhdeniye 'Grazhdanina* (The Birth of a Citizen), Moscow, Molodaya Gvardiya Publishers, 1971, pp. 47-48.

While in elementary classes the authority of teachers and their demands are generally not questioned, adolescents greet both the words and the demands of their teachers with their own "counterdemands", as it were. While the life of adolescents continues to take place within the context of their schools and families, which retain the role of major spheres in his education, in their relations within the class collective and in their families, they strive towards forms of activity that begin to exceed the school and family framework. In other words the system of relations of adolescents with the surrounding world changes; they seek to overcome the partly constraining elements of the relations associated with their family and schools and to enter into the wider field of social activities.

We are now addressing ourselves to a characterization of a major trait of adolescence, and its basic contradiction. In effect we have already stated its nature. Adolescents are no longer satisfied with the world of those interpersonal relations that are defined by their immediate environment. Unlike children, they no longer view that world as harmonious and seek to find their place within a wider context of social relations. But, since their lives continue to be primarily school-oriented and since in actual fact they are still excluded from social activities as such, adolescents express their propensities for activity and striving to transform life primarily in their imagination. Such a position may be described as one of "included exclusion" of the adolescent in social life.

To clarify this thought let us consider briefly the role of imagination (fantasy) in the individual's psychological development.¹

In Praise of Fantasy

In V. I. Lenin's notes on the works of Aristotle and Hegel contained in his *Philosophical Notebooks*, we find a proposition that is important for our own theme. In partic-

¹ A distinction is made in psychology between fantasy and productive imagination, for when used as scientific terms their contents are somewhat different. For our own purposes, however, these differences are not so relevant. Accordingly we will use these concepts as synonyms as is the practice in philosophy, for example.

ular Lenin writes that "even in the simplest generalisation, in the most elementary general idea ('table' in general), *there is* a certain bit of **fantasy**".¹ Elsewhere in these notes he also observes that "this quality is extremely valuable; it is wrong to think that only poets need imagination. That is a silly prejudice! It is needed even in mathematics; it would have been impossible to discover the differential and integral calculus without imagination. Imagination is a very valuable asset..."²

We know thousands of cases that show the need for fantasy in art, scientific research, and any form of creative activity. This is also confirmed by psychological studies that address themselves specifically to the topic of imagination. In a study entitled *Creative Imagination*, Theodule Ribot, a French psychologist, noted that any discovery, large or small, initially arises in the form of imagination—as a construction developed in one's mind with the help of new writings or new relations, and only then gains strength and may be actually realized.

Ribot notes further that all persons possess a capacity for imagination even when "most of them gradually become engaged in the prose of practical life, bury their hopes, consider love to be chimeric, etc. That, however, is only a regression but not destruction, for creative imagination does not vanish completely in any person, it merely expresses itself less frequently."

Without fantasy it is fundamentally impossible to imagine the process of work, unless it is entirely subordinated to rigorous standardization. For in undertaking work we must imagine its outcome. Otherwise one would have to assume that we do things without knowing what we want to achieve. Although it must be added, such cases do in fact exist.

Without imagination no form of planning is possible that responds to any more or less distant perspective. In that sense all persons plan and plan moreover not only and not so much the integral process of their own lives but also

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Conspectus of Aristotle's Book *Metaphysics*", *Collected Works*, Vol. 38, p. 370.

² V. I. Lenin, "Eleventh Congress of the R.C.P.(B.), March 27-April 2, 1922. Closing Speech on the Political Report of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.), March 28," *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 318.

more proximate objectives: how to study a foreign language, how to allocate a family budget, how to spend one's holidays, how to entertain guests. In thousands of daily tasks we continually use our capacity to imagine without even suspecting that we do this, just as Moliere's Jourdain did not suspect that he "spoke in prose".

And it is altogether obvious that children possess a specific type of imagination. Goethe noted that children can turn anything into everything. They construct with ease complex pictures and entire "novels" from a small number of real objects or their substitutes.

One should also stress another property of imagination. While images produced by fantasy do not fully correspond to reality they nevertheless reflect it. This is why imagination depends on the wealth and diversity of human experience and develops qualitatively as that experience accumulates. This is also why imagination is much more intense and vivid in adolescents than in younger children. It finds its highest expression in the creative activities of artists and scientists.

We thus see that "fantasy" (or more strictly—productive imagination) is a universal human capacity that makes it possible for individuals to respond actively to the surrounding world. Without it man can neither live nor act nor think in human ways either in science or politics or in the sphere of moral and personal relations with other individuals.

What is then the role that imagination plays in personality formation?

We cannot fail to note that it is precisely imagination that plays a major role in the emergence of the personality by helping to relate one's own life prospects with adopted social and moral ideals. It is possible that the difficulties of personality development of adolescents are partly due to the fact that their ideals remain entirely in the field of aspirations without being harmonized with real activities directed at their realization. And yet ideals are relevant to personality development only when by failing to correspond to reality they presuppose activities designed to change it. That calls for an ability to defend the ideal and find means and ways for asserting it. It is precisely this "tension deriving from a contradiction" between the pressures of life's circumstances and a striving to alter them that is embodied in the phenomenon of "included exclusion". It is with

youthful maximalism that adolescents seek to "change the world".

Karl Marx recorded in his works and illustrated through his own life that the adoption of an ideal is associated with the ability to see future reality behind a concept whose achievement requires practical activities that alter circumstances. A person should see progress towards the achievement of an ideal as a realistic course of struggle. But one can conceive advances towards an ideal only on the basis of a developed imagination which, by filling in the necessary details in the unclear and diffuse picture of the future, makes it possible to view it as a "reality". A capacity for imagination makes it possible to embody into an image those traits and characteristics of the surrounding world that express a socially formulated and culturally and historically specific view of things and human relations.

This is what explains the immense significance of imagination in human life. And should imagination not be developed in an adolescent or weakly developed or else be "extinguished", how can he become aware of the social contents of ideals and see a path leading to their achievement?

A full comprehensive development of personality is not possible without the development of imagination and fantasy. It follows that the development of these abilities in children and adolescents is a task for educators.

Leonardo da Vinci encouraged the development of fantasy by studying various spots, cracks in walls, and clouds in order to find in them similarities with persons, landscapes, and battles. Since then numerous procedures have been designed for developing the imagination.

There is one form of human consciousness and activity in which a capacity for imagination plays a fundamental role. This is the sphere of art which, in the words of Evald Ilyenkov, a Soviet philosopher, is a product of a developed, professionally perfected power of imagination and fantasy.

Psychologists have noted that most often an ideal does not arise from individual components but appears all at once as an integral image. Even in those cases when one can perceive the "components" of that image it, nevertheless, does not arise through their simple addition. Yet, in the practice of education a "component-oriented" approach to the formation of ideals continues to prevail. Many teachers attempt to present ideals in the form of a "compo-

site image" that brings together a certain set of best traits and characteristics.

Unfortunately this is not very productive, for in its essence an image is an integral phenomenon. As we perceive a work of art we do not consider the actions and behaviour of its heroes in terms of characteristics (as is still often the practice in schools). Instead we share the sufferings and happiness of its heroes and only later do we return in our thoughts to what has been read and take the next step as it were, by dissecting, examining and analyzing it from various points of view. Then, on that basis, we often return again to the integral perception of the image, supplementing it with significant details that have been provided by our analysis.

In a certain sense a capacity for art is a developed ability to see a living, integrated whole before one sees its parts. As an artist's fantasy freely moves within the substance of reality, it can turn it in such a way that make still unclear phenomena of life become apparent. In the words of Hegel, art changes our view of reality and reveal the deepest tendencies in the movements of human destiny and a person's soul, the most delicate shifts in personality development.

Art makes it possible to present a lesson in morality that is not too didactic or ideologically "stilted" (Vissarion Belinsky). The force of art lies in its capacity to offer images of ideal characters in different life situations while invariably affirming noble truths and ideals. Art not only shows us these ideal characters in action, but it also brings out the course of events through which a hero develops and, by stimulating self-training, serves as a guideline for adolescents seeking to develop their own course in life. But above all by "infecting" individuals with the daring to develop their own constructions, art provides an impulse to "imagining" their life in the particular way they wish to see it. For all these reasons art is the principal school of fantasy and aspirations.

Of course art is only one channel within which the development of imagination proceeds (even though it is also the most fundamental and most effective one). But there are also other means for developing imagination ranging from the games played by small children to all the forms of independent creativity of adolescents: artistic, technical, and literary. Finally, human communication, too, may become

a permanently operating school for the development of fantasy, provided that in such contexts individuals seek not only to express themselves but also to understand and perceive what lies "in the soul" of their counterparts.

Let us recall the words of Karl Groos, a German psychologist, who addressed himself to the difficulties of the pedagogical task we face in the development of productive imagination:

"When a pedagogue wishes to develop correctly the precious capacity for creative fantasy he faces a difficult task, namely, to tame the wild and frightened thoroughbred and adapt it to the service of good."¹

As noted earlier, the objectives of adolescents are in some respects specific. First, these are primarily autonomously defined objectives. Secondly, they are basically ideal-oriented, helping engage adolescents through productive imagination into a wider context of social relations.

These specific characteristics of goal definition in adolescents possess a deep meaning for personality development at that age. Being ideal they cannot fully play the role of realistically operating motivations for their behaviour. But it is important that having emerged in consciousness, ideal objectives play an important role in defining meaning by giving specific direction to further personality development.

Adolescents seek to enter the wide field of social interactions among adults, but they find this primarily in concepts and imagination with the help of which they associate themselves with the world and evaluate it. Ideals play a basic role in that respect. Their contents fill adolescents with a feeling of active power, they imagine themselves to be able to restructure the world and to have a mission to do this. In most cases they do not see and sometimes cannot see that the contents of their ideals are already known to the world and have already met with a certain development and fulfilment. This is why they imagine that the world does not recognize their ideals nor their individuality. Thus the feeling of harmony with the world that they experienced as children is destroyed. They are no longer children—because they define social objectives (often maximalist and utopian), and yet they are still not adults—because they can-

¹ Karl Groos, *Das Seelenleben des Kindes*, Berlin, 1923, S. 154.

not yet achieve these objectives. At the point at which they seek to realize their ideals they become adults.

Let us consider this more closely in connection with the problem of choosing one's future profession.

The First Duty of a Young Man Embarking upon His Own Life-Path

In seeking to find the watershed that divides childhood from youth and a striving towards adulthood from adult life itself, we turn to the problem of choosing one's future profession. In formulating and solving that problem the young individual's developing personality confronts for the first time a need to arrive at a socially significant and deeply personal choice.

"This choice is a great privilege of man over the rest of creation, but at the same time it is an act which can destroy his whole life, frustrate all his plans, and make him unhappy. Serious consideration of this choice, therefore, is certainly the first duty of a young man who is beginning his career and does not want to leave his most important affairs to chance."¹

These are the words of young Karl Marx in a secondary school essay entitled "Reflections of a Young Man on the Choice of a Profession."

A person's profession is one of the most important factors if not the most important one in modern man's life. We will again return to this question on several occasions. Here we will consider the problem of choosing one's profession in terms of its influence on personality development in middle and late adolescence.

First we must explain why we associate the choice of profession with two phases of adolescence. Traditionally the view was held that this choice is made only in late adolescence. But the social situation governing the development of today's school students has changed in recent years, as we will seek to bring out with the help of data obtained from two psychological diagnostic surveys. The first of these was

¹ Karl Marx, "Reflections of a Young Man on the Choice of a Profession," in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 3.

carried out in the late 1950s and early 1960s and the second in the late 1970s.

In a study of personality formation in the age of childhood, Lydia Bozhovich analyzed the social situation governing the development of older school pupils in the Soviet Union in the early 1960s. In her view the most important factor in that situation was the fact that older school pupils were about to enter into independent life and face the problem of charting their life path and finding their place in life. Accordingly one's choice of profession becomes an "affective centre" in life situations.

In illustrating her premise, Bozhovich relied on a study of Nikolai Krylov, a Soviet psychologist, who recorded a number of specific characteristics of the attitudes of younger and older adolescents during the period that followed the adoption of mandatory eight-year schooling in the country (1958). Let us turn to these data.

Substantial divergences appeared in Krylov's study between graduates of eight-year schools, on the one hand, and graduates of ten or 11-year schools, on the other, with regard to their plans for the immediate future and, in particular, their future profession.

In choosing a profession, students graduating after 10-11 years of schooling viewed this as a genuine act of self-determination and considered the real possibilities of the particular professional activity that they envisaged as well as their own possibilities and the difficulties that they would encounter.

The graduates of eight-year schools made their choice in an altogether different manner. (Let us recall that eight years of education were then mandatory and that accordingly the 8th class was a graduating class.) The overwhelming majority of students of that age (approximately two-thirds) envisaged continuing their general education in some way thus postponing their choice of a profession.

Even those eight-year school graduates who coped with the problem of choosing a profession, in fact, as later became apparent, did not make a genuine choice but chose a profession largely fortuitously. Another survey of the same students a year later, at the end of the ninth grade, demonstrated that by that time many of them had already revised their decisions. Eighth-graders were generally not very concerned by the absence of a definite opinion regarding their

future profession. They all expressed the view that there would be time to think about this in upper grades. Many of them mentioned their wish to receive a higher education but in most cases did not know to what particular institution they should apply.

Of course not all eight-year graduates intended to continue their studies in secondary school. Some of them planned to work and simultaneously study in schools for young working people, in specialised secondary or vocational schools, or still else simply begin to work. Krylov analyzes the motivations of such decisions in some detail. They could usually be explained either by the wish to find an optimal path for entering a higher educational institution (to acquire the necessary work record, which would facilitate their enrolment), i.e., in effect to postpone the time of making a final decision concerning one's future profession, by the need to help their families materially, or else by recognition of the excessive difficulties that they would experience should they continue in school.

Ninety-four per cent of the students who were surveyed expressed intentions to continue studying in general, technical or vocational schools or by taking individual courses.

Accordingly we see that in the late 1950s and early 1960s the social situation governing the development of youth in the USSR was such that the problem of choosing a future profession appeared to be truly relevant and urgent only to young persons in the tenth and eleventh grades (16-17 years old), although it did confront all students throughout their senior school years. A number of "tactical" approaches were selected in the eighth grade that preceded the actual act of selecting one's future profession. Those cases when following the eighth grade a young man chose to go to work without planning to further his education were attributable to difficult family conditions rather than to the general social situation of development.

Let us now consider the findings of another study.

Soviet psychologist Natalia Tolstykh asked adolescents and members of senior grades to complete a total of 18 unfinished sentences such as "I would be glad...", "I'm striving to...", "I wish...", "My immediate objective...", "In the future I plan..." That simple method (a variant of one designed by Joseph Nuttin, a Belgian psychologist) provided interesting information on the plans, strivings, and intentions of students

from the sixth to the tenth grades in the early 1980s. The findings of the study offer a colourful and complex picture of age differences in attitudes towards the future.

Answers relating to the choice of future professions were unexpected—at least in terms of traditional concepts relating to students' age-related characteristics. One might have expected that it would be in the senior grades, especially the tenth grade, that the greatest number of views concerning one's future profession would be given. In fact, however, it was the sixth and seventh grades that provided the largest number of views on the subject, and these views, moreover, referred quite specifically to a profession that had already been chosen. Students in higher grades referred to their future profession much less often. But it is unlikely that this indicates that they did not know what they wished to be. Rather one may assume that this choice had been made earlier (in ninth-tenth grades).

That assumption was subsequently confirmed in the course of discussions. Nearly all eighth-grade students not only named a specific future profession but were able to describe the corresponding system of preparation in considerable detail, particularly with regard to a program for further studies.

While according to Krylov's findings in the early 1960s the eighth grade did not mark a particularly tense transition boundary to "adult matters", and the eighth-graders viewed the problem of determining their profession with equanimity (there is still time, so to speak), twenty years later the situation had changed. On the one hand, there is the emotionally charged character, "the affective significance" that anything associated with the choice of a future profession implies for eighth-graders. At the same time, there is the fact that many of them already know who they wish to become. Both indicate that in the USSR today the real choice is made not in the tenth grade but in the seventh and eighth.

In short, a comparison of the studies carried out by Nikolai Krylov and Natalia Tolstykh shows that there is a tendency to shift the time of choosing one's future profession towards early adolescence.

It is apparently too soon to state that within the social situation governing the development of adolescents a shift has occurred towards an earlier choice of profession. This is

only a presumption, and the findings that have been mentioned can illustrate but not prove it.

Choosing a Profession Is Choosing One's Way of Life

In what way is a selection of a future profession linked to the psychological characteristics of adolescents? These characteristics are such that the question "What will I be?" is formulated and resolved by adolescents primarily at the level of aspirations, ideal strivings, and wishes, and is not directly associated either with corresponding reality (which continues to remain primarily school-oriented) or with a search for realistic means for achieving ideal life objectives.

Yet in the words of Goethe, "The man who will do something great must learn to limit himself," for it is the capacity to limit oneself that proves a master. It is in this that we find life's wisdom, for he who, "on the contrary, would do everything, really would do nothing and fails."¹

In short, immediately following an awareness of the unlimited nature of their possibilities (but only as possibilities since adolescents are in principle able to achieve everything but have not yet done anything), the question arises: what is it that one wants? And more precisely, in what manner would one like to realize one's abilities, and what sphere of human activity will one choose for this purpose?

We shall dwell upon this aspect further, for it is of fundamental importance.

The diversity of human capabilities is very great, and most of them, in the opinion of psychologists and educators may be mastered by anyone. But it is also true that at any one moment in time a person can do only one thing and carry out only one specific activity, for man's life is limited and he can achieve only several specific tasks. Georgy Gachev, a Soviet philosopher, notes that in modern society, which is based on a division of labour and in which a profession is generally so complicated that it requires all of an individual's attention throughout his life, a person is often able to carry out only one task during his lifetime. This is why one refers to a "life's task" and to the notion that one

¹ William Wallace, *The Logic of Hegel*, London, Oxford University Press, 1931, p. 145.

has "devoted" himself to it. In short, in order to be effective, man must part with the infiniteness of potentialities, for realistically he is able to do not everything but only some specific things. It is in such a context that the problem of choosing one's future profession arises.

More generally the process of determining one's profession begins quite early, much earlier than does the age of adolescence. Already in their role-playing games, preschool children "rehearse" many essential aspects of various types of professional activity. If one examines these games closely, one will easily note that in playing them children readily carry out all kinds of symbolic substitutions of real attributes of professional activity (a chair may be a "counter", and torn pieces of paper may represent "money" in playing at keeping a store), but still can be quite pedantic in following the rules not only of the game itself but also of the particular activity that is being represented. For instance, when playing at "keeping a store" one always finds a "salesman" and a "buyer", a "commodity" and "money" together with "exchanging money for commodities". While generally this is done only partially and in a naive childish way, in some respects the essence of the profession is accurately represented. Of course, in a strict meaning, this role playing cannot really be described as professional orientation.

Similarly fantastic visions of their future as members of some attractive profession also do not serve the function of choosing one's profession. This is because they greatly abstract from very essential factors serving as the foundation of choosing one's profession (e.g., an awareness of social need and a matching of one's inclinations with objective possibilities and abilities).

These stages of entering into the choosing of one's profession should be described as approaches to solving the problem; they are preliminary even from the point of view of corresponding preparations.

And yet, it is evident that today eighth-graders must decide where they should go. Into the ninth grade, or into a vocational or technical school. It is precisely at this point that one must ask what is involved in choosing a profession. What is it that the adolescent chooses in actual fact?

Igor Kon, a Soviet sociologist studying the problems of adolescence rightly notes that the selection of a profession, just as any plan for one's life, is a phenomenon that is

simultaneously social and ethical in character. Indeed one cannot consider the question of whom one wishes to become independently of the question of what kind of person one should be?

In the essay cited earlier, young Karl Marx viewed the question concerning the type of person one should be as the primary basis for choosing one's future profession. He wrote:

"... But the chief guide which must direct us in the choice of a profession is the welfare of mankind and our own perfection. It should not be thought that these two interests could be in conflict, that one would have to destroy the other; on the contrary, man's nature is so constituted that he can attain his own perfection only by working for the perfection, for the good, of his fellow men."¹

This moral aspect of choosing one's profession is expressed most clearly in relation to work as an independent value and in one's understanding of the social significance of one's work. As a sphere of social orientation of senior school students, work should be considered from the point of view of the development of a specific attitude towards labour among young men and women. This means that an established moral ideal should include a concept of one's future as one that must involve work. One's ascent to that ideal passes precisely through the work activity that follows a young man's graduation from school. But when speaking of the need for adolescents to understand the social meaning of work we do not have in mind attempts to persuade young men and women that all types of labour are equal (for this is not so), nor that it does not matter what they will be doing in the future (for it does matter). Rather we have in mind the need to develop an awareness that work is a major sphere of the individual's self-fulfilment and realization of his ideals and strivings in serving society.

In such a context we must also consider the widely debated need for school graduates to be guided into the sphere of material production. Frequently, moreover, this is interpreted as a need to assign the greatest possible number of

¹ Karl Marx, "Reflections of a Young Man on the Choice of a Profession," in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 8.

school graduates directly into the sphere of material production. But there is only one step between such a position and a concept of work as a form of mandatory service. That concept, however, contradicts the most fundamental principle of socialist labour, namely, that it should be conscious labour.

The reform of general school education and vocational training adopted in the USSR in 1984 seeks explicitly to better prepare young people for work and in this way to facilitate and accelerate their general social maturing and to overcome a prolonged infantilism which is harmful to society and painful for the young persons themselves. In the resolution of the CPSU's Central Committee and of the USSR's Council of Ministers, entitled "Concerning the Further Improvement of General Secondary Education and the Improvement of Conditions of Work in General Secondary Schools", it is stressed that there is a need "to improve the psychological and pedagogic study of students throughout their schooling and identify their interests and inclinations..."¹ It is only on the basis of corresponding findings of age-related psychology that one can develop the required system of professional guidance.

It is the task of professional guidance counseling in schools to make possible a wide, free choice of future professions for young people on the basis of an awareness of the social significance of labour activities generally and especially in key sectors of social production (including the sphere of material production). But this means that a young person can make a socially significant choice only if he possesses developed social and moral ideals and can consciously harmonize his own interests, possibilities and abilities with the tasks of the country's socio-political and economic development. Such a view of the essence of professional guidance seeks, above all, to develop citizens and mature individuals who, no matter what they become, would be morally prepared to assume a responsible attitude towards their work.

In speaking of the moral readiness for work, irrespective of its nature, we do not ask young people to be less dis-

¹ *O Reforme Obshcheobrazovatelnoi i Professionalnoi Shkoly. Sbornik Documentov i Materialov* (Concerning the Reform of General Education and Vocational Training. Collection of Documents and Materials), Moscow, 1984, p. 70.

criminating in choosing their profession. On the contrary, in our opinion it is necessary to encourage a high level of expectations among young persons in regard to their future profession, although such expectations, it is true, are not always distinguishable from a striving towards "clean" professions. For work to become the highest value for a young person, it must satisfy his need for self-assertion. This is why when it is noted that young people generally are turning away from particular types of specialized fields it is very likely to be explained by significant causes that may not be immediately apparent. It may be that not everything is in order in the sphere of profession itself, that its working conditions are socially and technologically outdated.

It is important to note that a young person's moral readiness for work is by itself not sufficient to attract him into specific spheres of production. That sphere of production itself should be morally prepared to accept the young worker, respond to his striving for work that corresponds to the highest standards of quality and effectiveness.

Yet, if it was only the question of improving labour conditions the problem of choosing a profession would be much simpler. This, however, is not the case. Frequently references to "poor conditions" are in fact employed to conceal an unwillingness to work. It is the pedagogical aim of many current works of fiction and journalism to oppose such a psychology that fully conforms to a description of "consumption-oriented". Such camouflaged parasitism is both deplorable and reprehensible. For parasitism is not only asocial but is also damaging to the individual. In particular, Leontiev has shown persuasively that the personality cannot develop within the context of consumption alone and that its development presupposes an emphasis on creative activities which alone know no bounds.

In short, we may thus conclude that the current Soviet system of social education has the role of developing such personality characteristics in young people that would allow them to freely choose their professional sphere on the basis of lofty social and moral ideals and, above all, on the basis of an attitude regarding labour as a social value. This raises the following question: what type of education meets this task most fully—specialized or comprehensive? Let us note that the use of these "unscientific" terms is quite deliberate since our experience with audiences of both parents and

teachers indicates that these are the words that are employed to refer to one of the most urgent pedagogical problems of our times.

The position of proponents of a "specialized", "narrow" education is relatively simple, and it is difficult to deny it a certain practical logic. The authority of a specialist, of a master in his type of work, of a man truly competent in his own profession, is quite high in our society. But since the function of schools is to prepare the younger generation for life, it would appear that this means that its role is to educate specialists, that is to teach a narrow field of specialization. This is a widely held view both among parents, teachers and students themselves. It is significant, moreover, that in this case we are dealing not only with a certain opinion but with a certain system of behaviour as well, which may be schematically described as follows. Most often in intermediate grades (but sometimes earlier as well) adolescents feel an inclination towards certain subjects, for example, in the field of natural science, towards physics, chemistry, biology, etc. This is an entirely natural and positive phenomenon. But it frequently assumes the form of a one-sided selective attitude towards individual disciplines—in the case that we are considering, this would be primarily a loss of interest in humanitarian subjects. Naturally, such inclinations are noted by teachers and parents. It should be emphasized that this situation is not exceptional or unique, but is more or less normal in personality development. One of its consequences, however, is a gradual shift of students' preferences in favour of a "narrow" education.

Classes begin to be divided in terms of "inclinations": those who are attracted to mathematics, for example, read additional literature and give greater attention to that subject, often at the expense of other disciplines.

Teachers quickly recognize those students who are especially interested in their own subject and also those who view that subject as "secondary". As might be expected, though not accepted, they give more time to the former. Similarly, parents are only happy to note the interest of their children in a particular subject picturing them as prospective outstanding mathematicians, physicists or perhaps linguists. They are often less concerned with declining achievements in other subjects. The wish to see one's children advance in some selected subject reflects subcon-

scious or even conscious concern for eventual admission to a higher educational institution. Finally the adolescents themselves with either explicit or else silent encouragement from parents and teachers also begin to emphasize their recently discovered "special field". Beyond this the author has often observed the following manifestation of such "specialization" in different grades: the "mathematicians" answer test questions for the entire class, the "linguists" ensure the "needed level" of preparation of the class for their native or foreign language, etc., and the outcome is something like a "cooperative".

"But is this not desirable", we have repeatedly heard from different people. "First, the sooner they begin to specialize the more possibilities and time they will have to thoroughly learn their profession; secondly, specialization is simply a form of mutual help, a type of joint-divided activity." In short, arguments in favour of such "early specialization" are abundant. But are they in fact as self-evident as "commonsense" appears to suggest?

Let us approach this issue from another side as well. We may for a moment assume that considerations of a moral nature constitute a secondary element in the selection of a future profession (even though we have sought to show that this in fact is not the case). Perhaps the author is mistaken—for it seems to be so deceptively clear: the earlier specialization begins, the deeper will be one's professional skills. But it would seem that we have inherited this opinion from a purely medieval "shop-oriented" conception concerning the preparation for a profession that has long since become obsolete, for it does not consider the fact that today's young worker differs substantially from the medieval apprentice. In noting that a "master's secrets" were transmitted from one generation to the next, we often fail to also note that today these "secrets" themselves are greatly changed and that the person who becomes a skilled master today is one who possesses the ability to change the secrets of his profession, i.e., to approach his work creatively.

There is no doubt that schools must play a substantial role in the preparation of specialists. But does this mean that students must be taught a narrow specialization? For after all it is the primary task of schools to prepare students for diversified creative activity and for life and labour in general rather than the learning of a specific profession. In

such a context the main objective of education centers on a dual problem: to educate active members of society as citizens and to provide for the transmission and further development of culture.

The need for a specialization in education is often related to the needs of social development. Yet it is widely known that the more the societies are developed technically the less education must be specialized. This is because in technically more advanced societies shifts in production often occur much more rapidly. Accordingly, narrow forms of specializations also quickly lose their relevance. In short, even if it is considered within the framework of economic analysis, narrow specialization is not a very effective instrument for educating labour reserves.

In analyzing the process of "specialization" under conditions of machine production in *Capital*, K. Marx observed that this is the way in which "professional cretinism" develops, i.e., the reduction of man's vital activities to a narrow field of social production sealed off from the full richness of life itself.¹ Similarly, Bernard Shaw, a master of paradox, observed that with continuing specialization we will soon see "specialists" who will know "everything about nothing".

Vladimir Shubkin, a Soviet sociologist, formulates the distinction between "narrow" and "broad" education as a contradiction "between the task of preparing skilled specialists for various branches of the economy, and that of transmitting culture".

The obvious drawbacks of one-sided, narrow specialization points to the fundamental importance of a broad, diversified education.

In short, only a comprehensive education can make it possible for school students to determine independently the sphere to which they will apply their abilities, i.e., their future profession, the sphere of their social life and their way of living.

Resolving that problem breaks the last thread linking the adolescent to childhood, for the choice of a profession is the first duty of a young person. At the same time the prerequisites for a young person's active attitude to life expressed in the choice of a future profession are formed by

¹ Cf: Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 1, pp. 340-41, 458.

the entire structure of personality development throughout the age of adolescence. One can state without reservations that a young person's active attitudes to life is influenced by the development in adolescence of social and moral ideals that may not be reduced to pragmatism alone. An ability to define one's own objectives, the setting of vitally important aims (ideals) governing present and future activities, overcoming purely infantile attitudes towards the world and oneself, and finally an ability to achieve defined objectives—these are all elements of personality development in the age of adolescence.

In defining the basic lines of personality development in adolescents and noting attendant difficulties we have sought to clarify their current contents. These, as we have seen, are relatively complex and contradictory.

As we have repeatedly stressed, the age of adolescence continues to evolve. Accordingly it is a matter of fundamental importance to diagnose the difficulties that we now encounter in educating adolescents. Because a correct diagnosis is always a step in overcoming such difficulties.

CHAPTER 5

YOUTH

“A person should not leave childhood and enter life without shoots of what is positive and beautiful, one cannot send forth a new generation without such shoots.”

Fyodor Dostoyevsky

The Age of Youth

Youth: When Does It Begin?

*Acceleration and Infantilism: Asynchronism in
Personality Development*

Marriages in Heaven and on Earth

Fathers and Sons: Age and Generations

“I Will Always Be Young”

The Age of Youth

Our age is often called "the age of youth". Clearly such definitions are relative: one could equally describe it as "the age of children" or the "age of the aged". There are grounds for both such definitions. It is quite understandable that the future of our civilization and its further prospects have been associated with the young. In short, much is said in praise of youth although there are also many older persons who are very critical of young people's views and attitudes. Thus, it is often said that previously young people were "better", and that they demonstrate lack of respect, conceit, and ignorant self-satisfaction, that they condemn everything they cannot understand or accept, and that generally they are wilful, unbalanced and even merciless. It would of course be useful for such people to recall their own youth when they were subject to similar judgements. That would help them understand that today's young generation is neither "worse" nor "better", but simply different. It would be wiser not to condemn out of hand but seek to understand before passing judgement.

There would be no need to even mention purely emotional opinions concerning the young, which could be viewed as simply "prejudices", if they did not also express a remarkable characteristic of youth itself. For it is widely known that any epoch's good as well as bad manifestations are reflected most vividly in its young representatives. Moreover, young people not only typify the virtues and vices of their epoch but also both actively praise it and loudly denounce its vices. This produces both adulation and undeserved criticism of young people, which in turn often makes it difficult to distinguish their real attributes from what others ascribe to them. One should, however, keep in mind that young people mirror their historical age.

It is also worth noting that as objects of psychological studies, young people possess a number of specific characteristics. Many findings of psychological surveys concerning principles governing psychological processes are generally based on psychological studies of young people. As for

psychological features specific to young people as an age group, it is unfortunately true that there is much less knowledge today in this field than with regard to the psychology of children or of aged persons. It is also symptomatic that unlike child psychology and the psychology of old age groups (gerontopsychology), there does not even exist a general term for the psychology of young people. It is true that recently a Social Institute of Juvenology has been established in the USSR. The term "juvenology" proposed by Soviet researchers derives from the Latin "juvenis" (young). Juvenology is the science of psychological characteristics of young people and is a new branch of science that primarily studies the specific characteristics of organisms during youth and maturity. For the time being, however, these studies primarily focus on medical aspects.

Today it is quite important to widen the purview and improve the quality of psychological studies that are specific to young age groups, i.e., to the third and fourth decade of human life. In such a context the problem of defining the psychological meaning of youth in human life continues to be important, including its most significant characteristics which determine the traits of the age of youth. This is also important because an excessively broad understanding of youth sometimes results in references to "young scientists" in their late thirties, "young poets" in their early forties and "young film producers" about to mark their 50th birthday. In such cases a very ordinary concept may present serious problems when applied to actual life situations.

Youth: When Does It Begin?

To avoid misunderstanding let us begin by clarifying the concept of youth as a specific age group. Youth does not follow the juvenile phase but rather includes it as its own first stage.

At this point a careful reader noting the smallest flaws in the author's logic might object. This implies, he might say, a denial of the juvenile phase (or late adolescence) as a separate and autonomous period. Let us try to explain.

In considering the history of the stages of life we have referred to childhood and adolescence, maturity and old

age, but have said almost nothing concerning the juvenile phase. In so doing, however, we are following the logic of the existing history of age groups that has traditionally not given any place to that stage. More precisely, those stages in life that today are called adolescence and the juvenile phase were both in fact (in the actual age structure of social life and in the age consciousness of individuals of past historical ages) included directly into either childhood or youth, for childhood was immediately followed by working adult life. It is only in the 1920s that adolescence emerged as a specific age phenomenon. This was associated with progress in general education and the development of adolescent school students as a group and a specific transitional stage between childhood and adulthood. What was then the fate of the juvenile phase?

Philippe Aries, a French historian whose work we have already cited on several occasions, writes that in the 17th century the very concept of what we today describe as a juvenile phase did not yet exist and that its emergence required a prolonged period of time. In our opinion, this process of emergence has not yet been concluded. The juvenile phase has not yet come to be defined sufficiently clearly as a distinct age phenomenon within a life cycle's structure. Turning to the works of prominent psychologists, one is struck by the fact that between the ages of 14 and 21 a man may be described with equal frequency as an adolescent, a youth and a young adult without any systematic sequence in the use of these terms. In the West's traditional pedagogics that distinction is practically absent: the age of transition from childhood to adult life that is usually associated with the ages of 10-12 years until 23-25 years is described by a single term, namely, adolescence.

One finds a similar phenomenon in works of literary fiction. In particular Lev Tolstoy in his trilogy—*Childhood*, *Boyhood*, *Youth* begins to refer to the age of youth when the hero is 15-years-old while the hero of Fyodor Dostoyevsky's novel *A Raw Youth* is already 21-years-old. It would appear that all this lack of clarity, which at first may seem to be a matter of terminology, in fact reflects the borderline position of the juvenile age in our own time between more or less clearly emerged states of adolescence and young adulthood.

In our opinion, the juvenile phase may be called a "sec-

ond transitional age" (or stage) in personality development lying between childhood and youth. Moreover, while the first transitional age (adolescence) is clearly closer to childhood and is usually described in discussing problems of child psychology, juvenile phase, or the second transitional period, is clearly closer to the age of youth. This will be our context for discussing its problems. The watershed between adolescence and the juvenile phase, in our opinion, is some type of beginning of independent life (the completion of school, beginning of employment, beginning of military service, marriage, etc.). For these changes in a person's life exert a primary influence on his entire personality structure and consciousness. Unlike adolescents who live primarily in terms of "school life", it is not only at the level of their consciousness and ideas alone that juveniles engage in the real world of adults, for they possess possibilities beyond those of adolescents (marriage, military service, the right to vote, etc.). In that connection the thought expressed by the great French thinker Jean Jacques Rousseau, in *Emile, or Treatise on Education* is quite interesting. Rousseau stressed the element of conscious self-determination as the basic content of the personality's "second birth" in juvenile phase (Rousseau refers to the age of fifteen). One should, however, refer not so much to an understanding of what is taking place as to actual self-determination. Mental self-determination already exists in adolescents in choosing a way of life and a profession and in defining distant goals. A juvenile differs from an adolescent in that he begins to act to realize these plans by asserting a specific way of life and mastering a specific profession.¹ This is why the responsibility for each of his steps is far greater and each error may carry substantial consequences that are sometimes dramatic (for example, an unsuccessful marriage). This characteristic of the juvenile age has been described by Vladimir Shubkin, a Soviet sociologist, who characterized the age of 17-25 as a "fateful" period in life during which the price of errors is no longer a low mark in school but sometimes years of wasted life.

Other changes occur in addition to those relating to juveniles' degree of independence. In the USSR it is at this

¹ The term "juvenile" will refer to young persons of either sex.—*Ed.*

time that a young person may already receive a grant in higher educational institutions or else technical and vocational schools; they may earn an income by working and may acquire a right to their own housing. In short, they acquire a certain independence and rely less on the protection and support of parents. The attitude of adults towards this age group also changes. While in most cases adolescents continue to be viewed as children, a young person at this stage will begin to be treated as an adult. And generally in spite of their obvious differences in social experience, attitudes towards both an 18-year-old and, for example, a 22-year-old, reflect a relationship with a young individual who is beginning an independent life.

At the beginning of the 19th century, the juvenile phase was viewed as a time of inner crisis that was similar to the crisis of adolescence and yet substantially different. Both are associated with the search for one's own self in adult environments. But in the case of an adolescent this rests on the inability to actually engage in adult life (hence the tensions and contradictions of adolescence), while in the case of juveniles the situation changes. Although he possesses all the rights of adults (in the USSR the right to work begins at 16 years, the right to civic activity and the right to marry at 18), young person is often unable to "find himself" in that adult life for other reasons. While contradictions within his consciousness are quite substantial, an even greater role is played by contradictions within his life situation. Let us illustrate this in terms of two typical situations.

In recent years there has been a trend for earlier marriage in the Soviet Union. Marriages at the age of 18 no longer surprise anyone. Even when based on love such a marriage occasionally does not last due to lack of a material basis. A contradiction then develops between the need and wish to live with a beloved person and, on the other hand, the inability to provide for such a life.

Another example. Upon entering a specific professional activity, young persons often wish to achieve revolutionary transformations in that sphere immediately and without delay. For instance, they may wish to make a scientific discovery or possibly some other achievement provided that it is vivid and impressive. But as a rule that "juvenile maximalism" is not supported by corresponding possibilities: there is a lack of required experience and knowledge. And

in such cases the young person is forced to lead a type of life in his professional sphere that he himself judges as modest and in which he plays the role of a student—one that in his own consciousness is associated with his former position of a schoolboy and that he wishes to abandon as something from an earlier stage.

If one does not take too seriously the “romantic model” of the juvenile phase which to some extent developed from the imagination of past thinkers, in our opinion there are no grounds today for viewing it as a distinct age in personality development. We believe, it is a transitional stage, i.e., the first phase of youth as the beginning of adult life, and in that sense it is clearly distinct from adolescence.

Acceleration and Infantilism: Asynchronism in Personality Development

Acceleration in the sense of accelerated physical development of children and young people is sometimes described as the 20th-century’s greatest riddle. Without any “visible causes” the young generation of the 1960s and the 1970s surpassed all earlier records of physiological development. This includes heights of 2 metres for individual “outstanding” representatives of the human race’s newest generation, and earlier age for sexual maturity, and much else that has produced surprise, elation and trepidation at nature’s capricious behaviour (what will come next?!). This has produced, in short, highly mixed feelings among physiologists, sociologists, psychologists, and educators who were first to observe the paradoxical situation in which students in senior classes were taller than their teachers. Naturally, there were many studies of this phenomenon and a number of scientific hypotheses and theories were formulated. They included the theory of intensification in solar activity, that of “constitutional selection”, theories relating to nutrition, vitamins, urban disruptions, radio waves, etc. Which led Soviet researchers to note quite sensibly that a multiplicity of theories points to the lack of well-founded propositions in each. It has been suggested that acceleration is attributable to a growing number of marriages among representatives of different ethnic groups.

In that situation, as is always the case when several points of view exist, the voice of devotees of scientific eclectics began to be heard, asserting that the curious phenomenon was due to the operation of a multiplicity of factors. While this did not clarify anything in particular, nevertheless it did have a soothing influence, for somehow references to a problem's complexity and to a phenomenon's dependence on an aggregate of factors always exerts a calming influence on people, though in fact it is simply a means for evading the issue. It was with the active participation of journalists and popularizers of science that discussions of the problem of acceleration reached a high pitch before suddenly bursting like a bubble: acceleration came to an end as children of the early 1980s returned to familiar dimensions and rates of growth.

In recent years a new "riddle of our age" has been discovered, although we shall note in passing that Ernst Haeckel, a prominent German biologist and author of *World Riddles*, has listed only seven such riddles. Yet in our own tumultuous times such riddles follow one another. As in the case of acceleration, the new riddle was "discovered" in a purely empirical manner: it was noted that today's young generation displays many symptoms of infantilism.

Infantilism literally means (from the Latin *infantis*—"infantile", "infant-like") a lagging development in which adults retain character traits that are characteristic of children. This is by no means a new phenomenon, and it does not of course simply refer to the preservation of childlike traits within the character of adult individuals. There is nothing undesirable in the fact that an adult person may preserve a certain naiveté and a childlike freshness in his perceptions, as well as spontaneity, simplicity and richness of imagination. All these qualities may be combined in a wide variety of ways within an adult's personality and produce ironic smiles and occasionally mild irritation. But this is not the phenomenon with which we are concerned. Such persons are often described as "odd", and they have always existed. Infantilism, on the other hand, begins at the point when a young person shows signs of parasitic attitudes, of social, moral, and civic underdevelopment. Essentially infantilism is a laziness of mind and heart. It is only recognized as a problem when it becomes, in effect, the fundamental way of life of a young person. In such a form

the problem of infantilism naturally constitutes a social phenomenon whose harmful consequences justly evoke condemnation.

But let us note the striking common features in both acceleration and infantilism. These phenomena, which at first seem to be absolutely different and even mutually opposed, in fact derive from a common source and are variations of a common problem—that of personality development. They express two of its aspects, two extreme forms. Both an accelerated development of physical characteristics and a slow rate of development of other personality qualities are disruptions of the normal course of personality development. But how then would one describe a normal process of personality development?

Here it is important to recall a fundamental psychological principle, namely, that of “asynchronism” in personality development. Psychologists have long noticed that various aspects of the personality develop unevenly. For example, Lev Vygotsky, as we have already noted, held the view that one problem of adolescence is an asynchronism of various aspects of an adolescent’s personality development: those relating to intellectual, sexual, and social maturing. Boris Ananiev, another Soviet psychologist, pointed to the non-correspondence in time of the advent of man’s maturity as an individual (“physical” maturity), as a personality (“civic” maturity), as a subject of cognition (“mental” maturity) and as a worker (“capacity for work”). He also stressed that the disharmony of these elements in time is even more pronounced in the last period of human life.¹ It is well-known that such concepts as “civic death” or “political death” may not at all coincide with physical death and may occur much earlier. At the same time people are inclined to accept the idea that human individuality remains immortal even after physical death, for instance in the case of “great men”. Later we will consider the phenomenon of the “death of object environment” which also does not coincide with the organism’s physical death. In short, this is a wider phenomenon that emphasizes such extreme instances as acceleration and infantilism. Disruptions occur only

¹ B. G. Ananiev, *O problemakh sovremennogo chelovekoznania* (Concerning the Problems of the Modern Sciences of Man), Moscow, Nauka Publishers, 1977, p. 272.

when the development of different personality traits is replaced by the development of one such trait at the expense of all others.

The case of so-called "wonder-children" is perhaps the most vivid confirmation of the "asynchronic" principle. The human race has provided many such "extraordinary children", including some whose activities in later life reflected elements of genius—as in the case of the mathematician Evariste Galois or the composer Wolfgang Mozart. But "ordinary wonder-children" occur much more frequently than men of genius. And their early abilities may be expressed in the most varied fields including chess, music, mathematics, sports, and military arts.

As a rule adults view infant prodigies with great awe. They do not always realize that few of them become persons of exceptional qualities in adult life. Although we do not propose to condemn such a view, we wish to express our own opinion, namely, that the existence of wonder-children offers still another confirmation of the asynchronic principle. For as a rule their remarkable abilities express themselves in some specific sphere of activity. And even if they grow up to be outstanding professionals in that field (which is, as a matter of fact, an exception), that is not a guarantee of harmonious personality development. For example, gifted mathematicians or chess players sometimes display inadequate emotional development. Similarly, outstanding young athletes often suffer from an inadequate development of practical intellect and occasionally of moral qualities as well. In short, our thought is simple: extraordinary children become extraordinary adults only when they develop the entire set of personal qualities rather than a particular personality sphere.

Our reference to the "asynchronic" principle in human development in a chapter concerned with youth is not accidental, for we believe that it is precisely during that age that there takes place a certain levelling of rates of development in individual personality spheres. While substantial differences in the character and rate of development of individual personality qualities may be acceptable in childhood and adolescence, the nature of human life at the stage of youth (the creation of families, beginning of employment, military service, active participation in social and political life) calls for a comprehensive shaping of the persona-

lity as an aggregate of all its aspects. At the stage of youth, a person can no longer lead a full human life by simply developing rapidly in a particular direction or by lagging substantially in other respects. Let us consider, for instance, such a fundamental attribute of youth as love and the creation of a family. These aspects of human life call not only for physiological maturity but also for developed moral feelings without which love itself is impossible, for it is distinct from simple sexual attraction. The state of development of civic feelings is also expressed in the creation of a family, inasmuch as the family is modern society's basic cell without which it would not be able to regulate its vital activities. Family life requires a responsibility on the part of both spouses if it is to remain stable. In short, the entire set of emotions and qualities that are characteristic of a mature personality are required.

At the same time such a levelling in the development of various aspects of personality should not be interpreted as a levelling of the asynchronic principle, which is in fact preserved throughout a person's entire life. No development is possible without qualitative leaps and without certain lags. The point is simply that in youth "asynchronism" must become less pronounced and be organized into the harmony of a unique individual personality. And it is regrettable when individual achieves only exceptional physical development or fails to develop emotionally, i.e., when we witness acceleration or infantilism. All things in man should be present in a certain measure. The measure of what is human in man, moreover (no matter how elusive it may be to come up with a short definition) is intuitively felt by everyone. And within it a harmonious combining of various qualities is by no means a negligible factor.

Marriages in Heaven and on Earth

Youth may be called love's modal age if one has in mind a certain optimal combination of physiological, psychological, social and other factors bearing on the sphere of emotional relations between men and women. We are referring to well-known established truth of everyday psychology that are also confirmed by both practice and corresponding research. Specifically, that it is during the age of youth that we find the best adaptation of a woman's organism for giv-

ing birth to her first child (approximately from the age of 20 to 25) and also the time when the great majority of persons marry for the first time. We are also referring to the unquestionable fact that youth is the age of man's greatest sexual activity (despite existing individual variations and exceptions that simply confirm the general rule). In short, we are referring to mass social characteristics to which alone we apply the concept of optimality, for in the words of Russia's great poet Alexander Pushkin, "All ages are vulnerable to love", here meaning the narrow sense of that word which excludes maternal and also platonic love. Like every expression of genius, Pushkin's observation is simple. For indeed no matter how fascinating, "optimal" or "modal" youth may be, love between men and women is not restricted to that age. It is well known that the legendary women who were considered irresistible and aroused strong passions were generally mature in age. History knows of many such examples. It is said that Helen, whose praises were sung by the great Homer, had five husbands and was more than 40 years old when she allowed Paris to capture her thus leading to the Trojan War. Cleopatra was well beyond the age of 30 when she captivated Antony. And one should keep in mind that as recently as the 19th century women about the age of 22-25 were frequently viewed as no longer young. Juliet was 13 years old and Romeo was 15, and this was the normal state of affairs in the 16th century. Fenimore Cooper's heroines from the early 19th century were usually 16-19 years old, but are described as "adult women". Honoré de Balzac, on the other hand, astonished his contemporaries by portraying a 30-year-old woman in one of his novels who thought herself to be at a height of her capacity to love. Subsequently this led to the expression "a woman of a Balzakian age", i.e., a woman loving for the last time. Today's 30-year-old women would only smile at such a thought: they do not at all view themselves as women "of a Balzakian age". They would probably add, moreover, words to the effect that women simply become more fascinating with age. And no one, of course, will disagree. In short, whatever the details, Pushkin came closer to the essence of the matter than many researchers who refer to modality and optimality. For our own part, since human love does not lend itself to formalization and attempts to grasp it in scientific terms are nearly always incorrectly

formulated, to say the very least, we, too, intend to avoid this subject.

Statistics also show that early youth is indeed the age when most marriages take place. It appears to be, moreover, the age that is most favourable for marriage. Sociological studies indicate that if during that relatively short period (for which there are no rigorous chronological boundaries but which roughly corresponds to the period between the ages of 19 and 28) a young man does not find a life companion, it will be much more difficult to do this later, for heightened expectations develop with regard to the qualities of the other person, one becomes accustomed to solitude, and one is less able to view oneself objectively in relation to a real partner.

However, marriages that take place during the indicated period exert a favourable influence on the individual's entire life, especially if the subsequent development of family life is successful, for family life has revitalizing properties with regard to personality, in realizing intimate feelings and thoughts, and in attaining desirable life patterns. We have in mind the point that as a social form of living the family offers a long-term model that largely determines personality formation in adolescence and youth. Individuals begin to think about their future family life at a relatively early age: it is in the minds of young adolescent girls as well as in those of young men. In one way or another everyone knows that family life awaits them and they are consciously or unconsciously preparing for this. This is why in cases in which this need is realized in youth in the form of a happy marriage, it relieves corresponding tensions. Unsuccessful marriages, on the other hand, influence the individual's entire personality structure as do situations in which a young man long fails in finding a life companion. Instead of experiencing a feeling of confidence in oneself and a heightened responsibility before one's spouse, oneself, one's children and society, not to mention the happiness and spiritual closeness that accompany happy marriages, persons who are unlucky in marriage or who have not found a marriage partner acquire personality qualities of an opposite type such as lack of self-confidence, irritability and envy. Of course this is more a general image rather than a rigorous principle.

Marriage, in short, is an important stage in a person's life

that is attained in youth. Its character and course exerts substantial influence on a person's psychological development, the expression of his abilities and the realization of his potential for spiritual growth.

Let us now consider the birth of children as an important family event. William Wordsworth, the 19th century English poet, observed: "The Child is father of the Man." The meaning of this brilliant paradox is that it is children who make a man a man. The birth of a child changes not only the self-awareness of women (they are now mothers as well) but also that of men (they have now asserted themselves in the world as fathers). The birth of children also transforms family structure by lending it a time dimension, as it were, engaging it in the eternal process of reproduction and of transmitting legacies from one generation to the next. We will now consider the role of generations more closely.

Fathers and Sons: Age and Generations

The concept of a generation usually refers to the interval of time between the average age of parents and that of their children. Thus a number of generations measured by a specific number of years are identified within a society's age structure. Herodotus, the ancient Greek historian, stated that 300 human generations constitute 10,000 years because there are three generations in a century. Isaac Newton noted that Egyptians and Greeks viewed the average interval between the birth of a great-grandfather and the birth of a great-grandson as a century. This represents three generations per century and a generation as thirty-three and a half years. The interval is usually measured along the female line (by calculating the average age of the mother at the time of the birth of her child in a specific year). In the USSR that interval is approximately 27 years.

Sometimes the concept of a generation is used as a synonym of an "age cohort", i.e., of persons who were born in a given specific year. In our opinion one should not confuse the concept of a generation with that of an "age cohort". While demographers use the concepts of a cohort to refer to persons who were born in a particular year, a generation combines persons drawn from several age cohorts. For example, during the Soviet Union's Great Patriotic War

against nazi Germany (1941-1945) the young generation included both those who were 17 years old in 1941 and those who were 25. The concept of a generation is thus more general and that of a cohort more specific. At the same time a comparison of life paths of two or more cohorts, which is known as cohort analysis, is an important method of age-related psychology. In that connection, Igor Kon states that one cannot, for example, compare the behaviour and level of development of today's senior school students with their counterparts in the 1940s or the 1930s without taking into account the influence of acceleration. The choice of a profession depends, among other factors, on the correspondence of the number of young persons completing secondary school in a given year with available positions and openings in higher educational institutions.

The concept of a generation is of fundamental importance for all age-related psychology. In Soviet psychology it is generally considered that the life of a person is the history of the formation and development of an individual in a specific society, specific historical period and specific generation. Differences between generations and the transmission of legacies from one generation to the next constitute the mechanism that accounts for the interrelation between the individual time of personality development and its socio-historical context. The development of personality in childhood and its subsequent formation during the lifetime of the individual takes place differently at various stages of social development and in different historical times. The difficult years of childhood and adolescence during war-time and the early postwar years and the happy childhood and adolescence of our contemporaries are altogether different phenomena.

Numerous problems usually develop at the interface between generations—this is the famous problem of “fathers and sons”, as well as that of transmitting spiritual and cultural legacies. In that connection Igor Kon observes that the acceptance of legacies by generations is always selective: some norms and values are assimilated and transmitted to subsequent generations while others that no longer correspond to altered conditions are rejected or transformed. The transmission of legacies differs in various fields of activity. In the sphere of consumption, leisure, artistic tastes and certain other reference norms, the divergences between

the old and the young are usually greater than in matters relating to major social values (political views and world outlook). This is explained not only by differences in the rates of renovation of corresponding spheres of culture but also by the fact that fashion, leisure, and entertainment are most closely associated with age. Differences between generations (habituation to specific styles of behaviour, music, dance, etc., assimilated in the years of one's own youth) are then further amplified by age-related divergences: youth's thirst for novelty contrasts with a subsequent orientation on stability.

The social context of phenomena taking place both within a generation and within individual ages is of fundamental importance. Urie Bronfenbrenner, an American psychologist, observes in his book *Two Worlds of Childhood. US and USSR*, that the problem of "fathers and sons" today differs substantially in the USSR and in the United States. In particular, American adolescents embrace a system of values that differs sharply from that of adults, while there is no such gap in the USSR where the social norms of young peers generally confirm the expectation of adults rather than contradict them.

Let us observe that the fate of entire age cohorts is directly associated with and depends upon the fate of a generation.

The relationship between stages of life and the fate of a generation was profoundly recognized and vividly expressed by such masters of literary fiction as Ernest Hemingway, Erich Maria Remarque and Richard Aldington. These authors created images of a young generation that had passed through the horrors of fighting during the First World War and was subsequently called, in the words of the American writer Gertrude Stein, the "lost generation". Deprived of the traditional age of youth that was destroyed by the imperialist war's senseless carnage and having lost illusions derived from a former peaceful way of life, psychologically these young heroes from the "lost generation" belonged to the age of maturity in spite of their actual age. They were persons made wise by their life's experience. They had already experienced too much by the age of 20 and 30 and had moved far from youth's innocent preoccupations. An entire generation had lost youth altogether as a specific period of life.

Another example of the way in which a young generation's self-awareness is linked to its historical fate is provided by the history of the revolutionary liberation struggle against autocracy in Russia. It is well known that the revolutionary Decembrists who experienced the harsh challenges of the Patriotic War of 1812, and shared with their nation the hardships of the military campaign and returned victorious had remained young in body but were made wise by their experiences. They therefore developed a world view characteristic of mature individuals. And in their attempt to overthrow autocracy they acted as grown men rather than as youths.¹

Still another example of such a linkage between age cohorts and the fate of a generation is provided by what has been called the "war's demographic echo" which was observed in the USSR in the aftermath of the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945).

During the war period as a result of much of the male population being mobilized into the armed forces and also due to wartime hardships, the birth rate declined sharply in the USSR. The number of births in 1943-1946 was nearly one half that in 1939-1942. In the mid-1950s this was reflected in elementary schools where the number of students declined and later, in the late-1950s, in the number of students in 8-year schools. Conversely, in the early 1960s the entire school system experienced a boom because of the large number of children born after the war. This produced a paradoxical situation in Soviet society, which is a society of equal opportunities and where each individual is provided with all the conditions that are needed for personality development. Because their numbers were few, children who were born during the war and immediately afterwards (1941-1946) found themselves in a different situation than older and also younger age groups. The number of students in individual classes was small and their teachers found it much easier to give them individual attention. When subsequently applying to higher educational institutions they found that there was room for nearly everyone.

In the mid-1960s the "war's demographic echo" affected the destinies of seventeen- and eighteen-year-olds. It is

¹ The Decembrists were Russian revolutionaries from the nobility who in December 1825 rose against tsarist autocracy and against serfdom.

especially important to consider this problem for this is the age when young people graduate from schools and try to find their life-path. Seventeen- and eighteen-year-olds are young persons who are just beginning their professional life. When their numbers fluctuate this affects the sphere of production as well as that of education. The country's labour resources depend on how numerous they are. A declining number of students following reduced birth rates during the war led to a decline in the number of students who did not complete their school studies, raising the proportion of school graduates who were admitted to higher educational institutions and technical schools as competition for admission was almost none. At the same time this situation sharply reduced the proportion of graduates that had to go to work immediately after graduating from school. It also encouraged a desire to go on to higher educational institutions based on a faith not only in their own abilities but also in the capacity of such institutions to absorb all school graduates. This psychological phenomenon preceding a demographic wave served to strengthen the status quo of our schools' system of evaluation that had come to prevail in prewar years when schools were largely concerned with preparing students for higher education. At a time when the number of graduates was declining, it was thought that we possessed sufficient resources to effect a transition to an 11-year school programme and this was carried out. Yet only after a few years the situation was dramatized by a new wave that forced the return to a 10-year programme in 1966. That in turn complicated the situation since it led to two graduating classes in 1966.

This material, drawn from the work of Vladimir Shubkin which contains a detailed analysis of the socio-demographic problems of today's young generation resulting from the "war's demographic echo", points to the very great importance of that phenomenon. While it is interesting in itself as an object of analysis and one could consider more closely the different problems that arise, due to the socio-demographic situation in society, for the members of particular age cohorts (for example those who were born in 1947-1949 and completed secondary school in 1966), we will limit ourselves to the most general conclusion, namely, that age-related characteristics of individuals and the stages of personality formation that are specific to different age

groups are closely linked to the destiny of corresponding generations which themselves inherently depend on the country's historical fate. Accordingly, the concept of a generation is of fundamental importance to age-related psychology for it establishes that inherent linkage between the history of a society and the destinies of individuals that greatly influences the course of individual life cycles. In short, the concept of a generation and its fundamental relevance to problems of age-related psychology serves to confirm once more the correctness of the fundamental approach of Soviet psychology based on a socio-historical consideration of the stages of life.

"I Will Always Be Young..."

At the beginning of this chapter we noted that our age is the age of youth, but we also noted the relative nature of such definitions. However, in one respect the fact is not subject to controversy: there is no doubt concerning the positive value of youth in the mind of modern man. While in other historical epochs preference may have been given to either mature individuals or the spontaneity of children or possibly grey hair, today in return for the right to be viewed as young many individuals are prepared if not to enter into a bargain with Mephistopheles, then at least to try some measure of black magic. Although today there is much reliance of jogging, dieting, aerobics and cosmetics, some individuals persist in their search for a fountain of youth. But we do not propose to return to that theme. Nor will we express any irony at modern attempts at rejuvenation. Rather we wish to understand the meaning of such striving to retain youth at all costs and why modern man is so insistent in stating, "I will always be young".

There is an unquestionable link today between age-related consciousness and the prolongation of human life. It is well described by Philippe Aries, the French historian:

"... the absence of youth and contempt for old age or conversely, the vanishing of old age (at least in the sense of man's degradation) and the appearance of youth expresses society's reaction to a prolongation of life. Its prolongation has added new meaning to segments of life that were given names by scholars of the Byzantine Empire

and medieval society but in effect did not exist at that time for most of the population. Our modern language has borrowed this ancient terminology, whose origins are purely theoretical, to refer to new phenomena.”¹

As life expectancy increased the concept of “youth” also changed. On the one hand it extended in the direction of childhood and on the other into the age of maturity. Youth became the most valued age influencing through its tastes, values, habits, etc., the tastes, values, and habits of society at large. This has produced a natural wish to be viewed as a member of the young generation—to enter that age sooner and to stay within it longer.

Today the value placed on youth is also enhanced by the greater duration of education and professional training, as required by the revolution in science and technology. Basic skills, knowledge and working habits are acquired more easily in youth. The need for the continuous education of adults and periodic renewal not only of knowledge but often of important fundamental reference norms in professional activity makes it only natural that mature as well as aged persons would want to fulfil these new requirements.

Many prestigious types of human activity are greatly limited by age (big-time sport, ballet, flying) and are inherently associated in our minds with youth. It is during his youth that a person is most able to engage in creative activity, to formulate heuristic hypotheses and is most productive. As a result modern scientific progress is largely associated with the young generation.

In short, youth is indeed attractive. This refers not only to physical health and physical beauty. To a large extent it also refers to the attractiveness of those types of activity that are most accessible in youth and which represent if not an exclusive privilege then at least an inherent attribute of youth. For youth is receptive to learning, especially intensive forms of learning which permit the mastering of the most complex forms of intellectual activity in various scientific and technical fields. It is also open to both intellectual and physical labour which not only realizes but also further develops and lends a creative dimension to personal

¹ Philippe Aries, *L'enfant et la vie familiale sous l'ancien régime*, Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1973, pp. 21-22.

capacities, knowledge and working habits that were assimilated earlier. And it is open to social communication, which is particularly active during those years. New acquaintances are easily made and new friendships develop readily. This communication is not only extensive in character but also attains substantial qualitative heights in love, marriage, and friendship. In short, youth appears to be such a strong attractive force to persons of all ages because it is the time when an individual's activity achieves substantial progress in the social sphere as well as in work and in private life and at the same time is not yet constrained by habit and the inertia of everyday life but retains a sense of perspective and an immediacy and freshness of vision. As a result youth is optimistic by its very nature. Young persons have already begun to act to realize their ideals and life objectives, to work in affirming their human mission. And while this does lead them to confront difficulties, these do not yet appear to be unsurmountable. Moments of despair, self-doubt and uncertainty are generally short-lived; they are quickly forgotten in the tumultuous stream of life as new possibilities are continually transformed into reality. It is precisely youth's objective to translate possibilities into realities. This is a characteristic that is difficult to abandon at later stages of life when the field of possibilities is substantially narrowed and when the individual's numerous social and personal ties that constitute his actual life environment not only enrich him and contribute to his further development but also constrain him by linking him to a specific activity, a particular way of life, and to specific values and orientations.

People recognize this characteristic already in youth. It then operates as an internal stimulus at times of psychological crises which youth is not spared. Some American psychologists believe, as do, incidentally, their Soviet colleagues, that individuals experience a crisis state at approximately the age of 30 years. This represents a developmental shift produced by a recognition that concepts of life acquired between the ages of 20 and 30 prove to be not entirely correct. Quite "suddenly" life ceases to seem simple and easily understandable. The very foundations of established ways of life are sometimes destroyed and one's entire personality is restructured. Sometimes these crisis phenomena are thought to result from a person's "insufficient preparedness for life". But we find this not at all convincing. For

while one may refer to the "unpreparedness for life" of an adolescent or a juvenile (and even then with great reservations in view of the relative meaning of what is referred to as "life"), that approach cannot be applied to a 30-year-old person possessing a decade of experience in living his own life. Igor Kon is much closer to the truth when noting that at times of crisis situations which influence the direction of their lives adults usually turn to self-analysis. And since no one can realize himself fully, such self-analysis before the face of eternity is always tinted with sadness. This is well said, although of course self-analysis is not a privilege of youth alone. For while adolescents as well as mature persons and aged individuals all possess an ability to reflect on the past course of their lives, such self-analysis is particularly significant at the threshold of one's fourth decade.

A reliance on self-analysis (that may be motivated by minor problems as well as by serious failures in self-determination in juvenile phase and early youth) is then both a cause and an outcome. As a cause, self-analysis produces a state of crisis, and as an effect it calls for a resolution of the tensions that are generated by contradictions. Let us clarify this further.

By the age of 30 a person has usually established himself more or less firmly within adult life—he finds and masters a profession, arranges his family life and chooses social activities, in short, he realizes many of the possibilities that life offers him. His personality acquires a certain stability and a unique mode of activity, morality, intellectual potential, and a type of behaviour. As a result it would seem that a person becomes "true to his own identity". He is already able to distinguish his own "self" within the world in considerable detail and "stepping aside" (in the words of Bertolt Brecht), see himself from a distance and declare, this is his own "self". But, in most cases this ability does not evoke enthusiasm in a young person. As he surveys his past, his achievements and failures he sees how in spite of seemingly successful life his personality remains imperfect. He sees how little has in fact been achieved even though a considerable part of life already lies behind him, how much time and effort has been wasted and how little he has in fact realized. Activities that only yesterday seemed to be "vitally important" and to which he devoted much effort now seem to be petty and empty in comparison with what he would

really like to achieve. There occurs a re-evaluation of values that produces a self-analysis and a critical re-examination of oneself. In doing this individuals see that their "allotted possibilities" are gradually narrowing, that they can no longer "do everything", and are unable to alter the development of their personality in the desired direction. They are "bound" by families, professions and familiar ways of life. Having apparently solved a most difficult problem, namely, having identified themselves in adult life and having asserted themselves as husbands, fathers, professionals and socially active individuals, they suddenly see that in fact they are still confronting the same task, namely, to adapt to new life situations by bringing the scope of their personality into correspondence with the new prospects and limitations that have now been perceived for the first time. It is this moment of crisis, in our view, that marks the transition of individuals from youth to the age of maturity.

That crisis, moreover, is not closely linked to some specific age, and the end of the third decade merely provides a conventional chronological reference point. Actually such a state of crisis typically appears (if it does at all—for it is possible that it may not) over the entire decade between the ages of 30 and 40. We have already noted that personality development is a permanent process that cannot be stopped at any particular stage of life (although it may, of course, happen that some individuals cease to develop). And a crisis of the type that has been described merely provides an impulse to a new round in the spiral-like movement of personality development.

* * *

In concluding this chapter on the age of youth we must pause to consider the basic psychological characteristics of that age from which we infer, in accordance with our theoretical analytical scheme, the dominant types of activities that are specific to youth as well as specific features of social situations governing development, and the new psychological elements that emerge as a result.

Naturally it is not easy to answer these seemingly "simple" questions. But then this is a problem that is common to all age-related psychology. While with regard to childhood and adolescence the identification of dominant types

of activity that determine development is a task that, we believe, has been resolved, similar work with regard to later ages of life is only beginning. Moreover, in juvenile phase the structure of human activity not only becomes complex and many-faceted but, what is especially important, it varies substantially depending on the concrete social situation governing personality development. This is why many researchers are altogether skeptical concerning the possibility and even the correctness of seeking to identify the dominant activities in that age. Indeed, while until juvenile phase the vital activities of children and adolescents are organized relatively homogeneously on a mass social scale and are clearly associated with specific social institutions (the family, kindergarten, school) and while for the same reason they are also basically similar for children of a given age (for instance all children begin to attend school at the age of 6-7), following the completion of school the range of forms and types of activity becomes truly impressive. How does one compare the activities of an 18-year-old worker, an 18-year-old student and an 18-year-old soldier? How does one compare the social development situations that are formed for a young man who has just moved from a school environment into a production unit, who has been admitted to a higher educational institution or who has been called for military service? Is this at all possible?

In our opinion the difficulties in research that arise in this connection can in principle be overcome. First we hold the view that as far as beginning with the age of youth a person's activities become more complex and more diverse, they do not cease to perform their fundamental role in his life. On the contrary, they remain the basic mechanism governing personality development. Secondly, differences in social situations governing development in diverse spheres of life require a distinct analysis of the forms of activity in each field. Third, age differentiation continues to be associated with crises in some forms of activity and transitions to new, different levels of activity within a single sphere of life. What is fundamental is simply that with regard to any developmental situation and, more generally, any stage of personality development, one may establish the type of activity that provides for the personality's progress and development, and makes possible the emergence of certain new psychological elements.

MATURITY

Alexander Pushkin, *Eugene Onegin*

“Youth’s Old Age” or “Old Age’s Youth”?

“In the Midway of This Our Mortal Life...”

These words were written by Dante when he was 33 years old in his brilliant work “The Divine Comedy”. In quoting them I would like to draw the attention of the reader to the great poet’s age self-consciousness. He perceived himself as a mature man, standing neither at the beginning nor at the end, but midway through his life, in the plenitude of his powers, when the wisdom of the French proverb “Si la vieillesse pouvait, si la jeunesse savait”¹, does not at all seem so very wise, because at the age of 33, he was neither an old man nor a youth. Rather he knew and could do everything. He began the first page of his poetical work filled with majestic tranquillity, removed from all that was futile and transient (but not from life!). Dante—the poet and mature man!

Ancient Greeks refer to this age and the accompanying state of mind as an “acme”, which means peak, the highest degree of anything, the prime (of life), the period of flowering, i.e., the moment of a human personality’s full development, when an individual achieves that which the English call “identity”. And it should be noted that in Antiquity the attitude towards this age was one of great respect: famous ancient Greeks and Romans (especially men of letters) were interested in mature men, warriors and citizens at the age when they “accomplished deeds”. Similarly old men were honoured for earlier deeds, in fact, for that time of their life when they were at their “acme”, for the accumulated experience. Children were respected for their future as citizens and warriors, for their anticipated “acme”. Yet ultimately it is relatively unimportant whether the term “acme” is good or bad—it is more a matter of preference. Much more fundamental is the concept of maturity itself as “acme”. This is not only because in one form or another it exists in many peoples (the ages of 45, 50, and 55 are mentioned). The conception of maturity as a flowering of personality is not only of historical and cultural interest,

¹ “If only old age could, if only youth knew.”

but is also important from the point of view of specifically modern problems in the psychology of maturity.

The Swiss psychologist Edouard Claparède, one of the leading representatives of so-called functional psychology, which examined psychological phenomena primarily from the point of view of their function in life and their integral place in a behaviour set at any given time, noted that the mature age is equivalent to a cessation of development, a "petrification". In a certain sense this premise is simply a logical conclusion drawn from the concept that adulthood and maturity are the aim of personality development. In the opinion of many psychologists, development per se ceases following the onset of this stage and is replaced by simple changes in individual psychological characteristics. That is in effect the position of the Human Development Committee at the University of Chicago whose works emphasize the fundamental methodological and practical role of the concept of "tasks of development". For each stage of human life a number of "developmental tasks" are selected that are quite detailed and specific. These tasks differ substantially for preschool-age children and children of school age, early and late youth, etc. It is only with regard to the mature personalities that "developmental tasks" are not formulated in any way.

In short, we are presented with a highly specific view that is widely held in contemporary age-group psychology, namely, that maturity or "acme" is both the objective of development and its conclusion.

But then what is to be done with later ages of human life: if maturity is the conclusion of development, what then is old age!? And how should we view the great Michelangelo at the age of ninety, who when asked by a cardinal why he was standing at the gates of the Coliseum on such a cold windy day, replied, "I am learning!" Is this the whim of a genius? How is it possible for a very old person to learn, i.e., develop and perfect himself if his prime of life is already behind him, if he cannot possess any "tasks of development" and has "petrified". Yet Michelangelo said he was learning, thus asserting man's right to an unlimited capacity for self-development and self-perfection.

From the point of view of Soviet psychologists, the process of man's development is fundamentally limitless, for development is a personality's basic mode of existence. At

the same time, personality development during maturity possesses its own specific psychological features. Let us now consider them.

Maturity as Responsibility

Awareness of responsibility and a striving to attain it is the decisive sign of maturity. Legally responsible person is a person who is responsible before the law. Psychologically a responsible person is one who is answerable for one's behaviour, for the contents of one's life—above all to oneself and to others.

One may regard as the basic elements of responsibility an ability to judge independently and an ability to choose a line of conduct. When generalized, these two characteristics may be viewed as attributes of developed individuality. For it is individuality that is the most important achievement of maturity: what a mature person loses with age in spontaneity is replaced by a more developed individuality that manifests itself most vividly in these two elements.

In his novel *The Ides of March*, Thornton Wilder, the well known American writer, somewhat paradoxically links responsibility to freedom and observes that "freedom is responsibility". In our view, this is a very profound judgement that makes it possible to illustrate the premise mentioned at the beginning of this section.

In considering the course of man's life, we cannot fail to note that at first glance it represents a continual transition from a state that is free and not linked with any specific activity, or form of life, to an increasing dependence on one's life's activities. Having acquired during his youth a wide spectrum of human potentials to engage in various types of activities and having mastered them, a mature man cannot avoid feeling a lack of freedom in relation to these activities. He already possesses a life history, a life experience, as a product of the activity in which he engaged continuously during the entire preceding stage of his life.

In a certain sense the carrying out of activities objectivized them in their products, one of which is human personality itself, i.e., that which man has made of himself.

In responding to his own inclinations and having selected an attractive sphere of life, a profession, and a life part-

ner, man, in so doing, becomes dependent on his environment: he is limited by the professional sphere of application of his abilities and by his family responsibilities. And it is very difficult to break these ties, even if it seems to him, for example, that his family is not very important and he could easily escape. Such deceptive "flippancy" leads to spiritual traumas that heal only very slowly.

And it is precisely at this time, when he finds himself in a situation of comprehensive dependence and is compelled to assume the burden of his preceding life interval, being, it would seem, totally limited in his freedom, that man comes to know the full force of necessity and the objectivity of the social relations into which he has come to be engaged through his life.

Let us look at this problem in more detail.

The fundamental question concerning the concept of man as a combination of external determination and free will was sharply posed by Hegel, who rightly observed that the living unity of the spirit (i.e. man himself) spontaneously opposes its subdivision into abilities and forces independent of each other or, what is ultimately the same thing, to activities that are conceived in such a way.¹ But Hegel already well understood that in the presence of a division of joint work such a state of affairs is a historically objective contradiction. This is why he states that there is a greater need to understand "those contradictions of the spirit's freedom and its determined state"² that become apparent at this point. Hegel himself solves this problem in the following manner: the spirit, in his view, according to its conception (substance) is freedom, and in this regard it is opposed to nature.³ But in nature what prevails is not freedom but necessity.⁴ Initially the spirit is free only in terms of its conception ("a pure personality"). When it begins to develop, the spirit is connected with the sensory world (individuation of the corporeal), and the realization of its freedom (development of the personality) proceeds in steps (individuation of the perceiving subject); and that movement attains a peak (its objective) in absolute knowl-

¹ G. W. F. Hegel. *System der Philosophie*. Dritter Teil. Stuttgart, Fr. Frommanns Verlag, 1929, p. 14.

² *Ibid.*, p. 14.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 19-30.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

edge in the form of philosophy. Determination from the outside is alien to the spirit, and it therefore exists for it as a genuine aspect only in the form of necessity (and is perceived only as that which can be real in thought and accords with its objective governing principles). In this sense freedom, according to Hegel, is apprehended necessity.

If we clear Hegel's ideas from the husk of objective idealism and renounce the concept of man as a "spirit", as well as the absolutization of philosophical knowledge and other attributes of Hegelian speculation, and seek to preserve the principal element in "the Hegelian dialectics, materialistically interpreted",¹ we must recognize that his idea of freedom as apprehended necessity is fundamentally correct and essentially constructive. It makes it possible to resolve the existential paradox that caused us to turn to Hegel's thought, namely, how does one solve the problem of freedom and necessity that constitutes a vital dilemma to persons finding themselves on the threshold of maturity? This is how Hegel answers this question.

Hegel confronts man with a need to accept the conditions that are defined by the actual world and to accept himself and his freedom of will as the freedom to choose the need to transform the world in accordance with the ideas that it contains rather than to choose hypochondriac sufferings deriving from abstract ideals and an irrational thirst for one's own subjective universality ("exaggerated idealism" in the words of Vissarion Belinski, the Russian literary critic).

Yet when turning to practical life most people find themselves immersed in a sphere of specific objects: these objects may change in their particular distinctive features, but they always lend themselves to some general rule or governing principles. As he gains knowledge of the object-related contents of reality in its specific manifestations, man elevates himself above objects only when he perceives something universal in their particulars. At the point when his own activity begins to correspond to his task (for example, when a person is recognized as a professional), he is then able to transform the object of his activity by also contributing to it a new element of his own individuality. In

¹ V. I. Lenin, "On the Significance of Militant Materialism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 234.

so doing and in realizing himself in an object and merging with it, man acquires a certain "equilibrium" with that object and no longer finds "any resistance in his objects".¹

Following this necessary excursion into philosophy, we must now return to the sphere of psychological analysis. First we will draw conclusions from the premises that have been cited.

We have seen that at the threshold of maturity individuals resolve the dilemma between freedom and necessity in their own activities, thus determining their place in life in ways that structure their modes of living and action. In order to become free, an individual must accept the objective conditions of his activity as his own, and in so doing is transformed from "bad subjectivity", in Hegel's words, into an individuality that asserts itself in the world on the basis of acquired forms and modes of activity, as a responsible subject with forms of behaviour and judgements specific to him alone.

But how is a normative, socially established and hence impersonal human activity transformed into a unique individual activity? This is the question that must be answered.

The Problem of Personality "Norms"

Let us reformulate the problem in more general terms.

Boris Bratus, a Soviet psychologist, has interestingly noted that we know much more about the anomalies and pathological deviations of a mature individual than what is considered a "normal" individual from a psychological point of view. Of course, psychological pathology is a very important discipline, and its findings can shed light on many aspects of our spiritual life but not on all of them, though such attempts have been made (for example, an expanded concept of neuroses in psychoanalysis). Gordon Allport, an American psychologist and representative of "humanistic psychology" (which has evolved in reaction to excessive emphasis on psychological pathology and attempts to construct a theory of personality based on the study of "lifeless" subjects), considers that the personality should be stud-

¹ Cr. W. F. Hegel, *System der Philosophie*, p. 108.

ied by generalizing the creative qualities of outstanding representatives of the human race. The psychology of the personality thus ranges from the human spirit's lofty heights to its hidden and unseemly crevices. In short, neither the category of "measure" nor that of a "norm" is highly regarded in psychology.

It may be appropriate at this point to say a few words concerning the methods used in psychological studies of the adult personality. It is well known that the soul of any science lies in its method, for both the level of the development of a science and the actual wealth of its contents as well as the significance of conclusions are ultimately determined by the state and development of its methods. And when we speak of methods, we are in fact referring to its research instruments. Accordingly in the present context this raises the following question: what are the methods that make it possible to study personality development over its entire lifetime?

Let us begin by noting that these methods are highly diverse. Here are a few examples. American psychologist David Levinson has studied the psychology of literary heroes and film characters, assuming that literature and films reflect relatively fully and in concentrated form the most typical psychological traits of contemporary persons. Levinson's colleague conducted 600 interviews with 300 patients of psychiatric clinics and 300 healthy persons who volunteered to help the researchers. Finally, a third American psychologist, George Vaillant, used still another method, a so-called "longitudinal" study (pursued over a long period of time). Over a period of 38 years he observed the lives of 268 Harvard University graduates beginning when both he and his "subjects" were still young. Individuals who were selected for this study filled out detailed questionnaires once or twice a year.

In short, observations, survey questionnaires and interviews are well established methods in psychology. But this list could easily be continued to include tests (psychometrics), investigative and formative experiments, the formulations of synthetic psychological characterizations, biographical analysis, anamneses, diaries, letters, autobiographies, questionnaires, verbal accounts, reminiscences. These are only some of the methods that may be employed by present-day psychologists studying personality devel-

opment. They may rely on a full range of psychological methods and procedures.

It might seem that with the help of such a wealth of scientific methods, psychologists should have long ago been able to establish the normative characteristics of human activities and discover the norm for particular ages as opposed to deviations. Based on material that has already been presented, it might appear that we should have long been able to formulate some normative activity characteristics. To some extent we have done this when we noted for preschool age children, for example, that normal personality development takes place through games and results in new specific psychological formations. Yet at the same time it is not possible to make categorical statements, for the normative character of activities and personality is always relative. Let us clarify this point.

In analyzing ontogenetic personality development, Alexei Leontiev, whose works we have already cited, has noted that, in assimilating universal modes of object-related activity underlying personality development, man engages in practical or cognitive activity in relation to instruments and theoretical objects that, even though it corresponds to the human activity that they embody, is nevertheless, not identical.¹

Leontiev then explains his idea: "Above all, an adequate relation between an individual and his tools is expressed in the fact that he appropriates (either practically or theoretically) the operations that they embody and in so doing develops his own capacities.² Adequacy thus consists in correspondence to a model or norm of activity that is contained in its object-related contents. But how should one interpret the stipulation that the model cannot be identical with the resulting activity? In our opinion this is not merely a stipulation but a fundamental aspect of an activity-oriented explanation of psychological development that is also needed for a correct interpretation of that concept. The fact of the matter is that while general modes of action are assimilated on the basis of historically developed

¹ A. Leontiev, "Ob istoricheskom podkhode k izucheniyu psikhiki cheloveka" (Concerning the Historical Approach to the Study of Man's Psyche) in *Psikhologicheskaya nauka v SSSR* (Psychological Science in the USSR), Vol. 1, Moscow, 1959, p. 21.

² *Ibid.*

models of activity neither that assimilation itself nor its outcome is identical with the general mode of action. In assimilating a model, a person creates it anew rather than simply reproduces it, and what is newly created always differs from the reference model. Strictly speaking, in developing as a personality an individual does not in fact assimilate anything if that term implies a reproduction of the model. Instead he creates that model anew according to the pattern embedded in the contents of object-related activity, for each object-related action, no matter how adequate it may be with regard to known models, is always unique. It is this that constitutes the activity-related basis of an individual's self-development as he continuously creates his own world and compares it with its object environment developed and assimilated in the course of anthropogenesis and human history. Even when it seems that the individual is only imitating a particular form of activity and individuality, he still contributes his own personality to such acts, thus transforming the norm into a passive basis for its modification.

This is the source of the ambivalent position of the normative forms of activity that are threatened with destruction, change, and transformation into something else at each moment of human existence. In such a sense a norm always exists and also never exists, for the task of assimilating a norm is also that of destroying it and overcoming it through a new quality.

This is also true of human personality which represents an unavoidable by-product of man's activity (for an individual develops his personality even when he does not consciously seek to do this). An individual personality always corresponds to some concepts of man and his role and to what is human in man, in terms of specific socio-historical and cultural conditions. But personalities never fully correspond to such norms and are never identical with them, for in the final analysis, even the classification of types based on the frequency of occurrence of particular traits is merely a theoretical method. In the real world one does not find two absolutely similar persons, just as one does not find in nature two absolutely identical objects, whether they be leaves in a forest, drops of water in a stream, or atoms in a molecule. They are no more than similar.

Such a conception of activity and personality also implies a specific approach to the problem of norms as applied

to psychic development. In the sense of a model of activity and of a typical combination of most frequently occurring human qualities, a norm always constitutes only one facet (even though necessary and important) of human activity and a basis for self-development.

Let us consider the role of these provisions in age-related psychology.

Why Do People Dislike Their Own Age?

A. Moreau de Jonnés, a French statistician, once observed "with some bitterness" that, "it is almost impossible to establish the age of individuals with any precision, for some do not know it while others conceal it".¹ From a psychological point of view the second group is more interesting: it includes both women and aged persons. But while it would seem that the former have always sought to diminish their age, i.e., hide it, the latter, surprisingly enough, display an obvious tendency to overstate it. Both have exasperated demographers trying to understand why, when counting within a single age cohort (i.e., persons who were born in the same year) first, the number of adolescent girls and somewhat later the number of women between the ages of 18 and 30, the latter turns out to be much greater. For no one in his right mind would imagine that as they grew older these girls also multiplied. The answer to this demographic puzzle is very simple: both unofficially and quite officially as well—in providing census data—many older women seek at all costs to shorten their age by several years. One can only note that the demographers' "noble indignation" is striking in its neglect of the relevant "cultural context", for like anyone else they cannot fail to take into account the fact that scientific subjects can also be sensitive. The ancient Roman poet Ovid had warned that one should never ask a woman her age ... especially if she is not in her first youth, if she has already passed the prime of her life and finds it necessary to pluck out greying hairs. Only an infinitely naive person would judge a woman's vanity as a flaw! Conversely, aged persons, especially those of a very advanced age, try to add a few years to their actual age,

¹ Alex Moreau de Jonnés, *Elements de statistique*, Paris, Guillaumin, 1856, p. 69.

while some "record-breakers" manage to add twenty and even forty years. Oscar Anderson, a German researcher, has called this phenomenon a form of old age vanity. He recalls a case in which a man professing to be 121 years old, was in fact only 85. In the view of the United Nations demographers this practice is often attributable to a wish to qualify for various benefits before they are due. Let us simply note that this is not the only explanation.

There generally exists a somewhat specific tendency to dissociate oneself from one's age. This is an insistent wish to either be or else appear to be a person of another age. A little girl—almost a baby—will heatedly insist with tears in her eyes that she is "not small", even though she understands very well that she is. Adolescents yearn to be called "adults". And everything possible has probably already been written about women who wish to appear younger. Many men, incidentally, can also be described as seeking to appear younger, taking pains to conceal their age and particularly its less attractive attributes—such as a protruding stomach, baldness and greying temples. It is paradoxical but true that few people like their own actual age, and great pains are taken to shift as soon as possible either to an older age-group or a younger one. What then explains these twists of our age self-consciousness?

While it cannot be said that this phenomenon has been neglected by psychologists, relevant research has been primarily concerned with child psychology. In particular, in a study carried out by French psychologist Bianca Zazzo together with a number of her colleagues, children between the ages of 6 and 12 were asked which age they preferred: to be a small child, to retain one's own age, or to be an adult. They were also asked whether they would prefer to be older by one year, to quickly become young or to quickly become an adult. Zazzo assumed, moreover, that the choice of one's own age is evidence of greater maturity, a greater level of self-awareness and self-esteem. This, as we shall try to show below, is debatable. But first let us turn to Zazzo's findings.

Children from different levels of French society were included in her survey ("workers", "employees" and "representatives of higher level positions"). Age-related and socio-cultural differences were clearly reflected in the answers that she obtained. The children were unanimous con-

cerning only one issue—their wish not to be small children. Children of the “workers” and “representatives of higher level positions”, moreover, led in their wish to be adults. Older children, it is true, tend to increasingly prefer their own age, and this appears earlier among children of “representatives of higher level positions”. Zazzo interprets this to indicate a “greater infantilism” among children of workers, although she adds that this is greatly influenced by objectives of adults. In particular, higher social levels place a greater emphasis on personality development (moral maturity, independence, level of interests), while working families emphasize maturity in practical affairs and adaptation to the requirements that are associated with their social role. In all cases children of “employees” held an intermediate position.

An important merit of Zazzo’s study is the close attention that is paid to the social environment within which personality development takes place. The corresponding differences obtained are both significant and suggestive. We are presently concerned, however, with a different matter, namely, an acceptance of “one’s own age” or preference for another age. Zazzo’s conclusion that changing concepts of oneself operate as a moving force in personality development is unquestionably correct. But we are prepared to debate her inference that children and adolescents who express a positive evaluation of their present “self” have integrated their past development and are preparing themselves for subsequent stages. We believe that this premise is only partly true and reflects only one side of the coin. For as we have already noted on several occasions, striving to become an adult is as essential a factor of development in childhood as is the tendency to retain one’s age. Beyond this the predominance in adolescents of a satisfaction with their age may impede further personality development (let us recall the concept of infantilism). Apparently one should prefer a certain union between satisfaction and dissatisfaction, between a co-existence and struggle of opposed motivational tendencies. We call this feature of age-group consciousness (that we do not consider to be an attribute of child and adolescent psychology alone) a type of psychological formation in which man is appropriating specific actions, thought and behaviour that are normative for the given age-group, experiences both satis-

faction with his achievements and dissatisfaction with his present level in the light of tasks of future development. In such situations both a striving to correspond to one's own age and a simultaneous wish to pass into another state are characteristic. This is seen clearly in all crises of development that emphasize the second side of the contradiction (yearning for change).

We thus arrive at a very important premise that establishes still another characteristic of man's unfolding personality, namely, its capacity to transcend the boundaries of any finite form. Here we wish to note that this characteristic is also a feature of age-related changes in personality development in relation to which reaching and mastering a new age is eventually only a moment of development that must be replaced by a new stage, and the transition to a new age, which is already inherent in the preceding age as a tendency to overcome its boundaries.

The nature of man's personality is such that it continually exceeds its own limits (develops autonomously) and constantly extrapolates itself into the future, for the desire of a future is a desire for development.

But the acquisition of a new form and an overcoming of its boundaries may also derive from a feeling of nostalgia for the past, which tends to be especially pronounced among mature and aged persons. The same mechanism then operates in a reverse mode, as it were. A new social situation of development, for example, in the mature age, calls for moving beyond forms of activity that are characteristic of youth, an acquisition of stability, responsibility, and a new life style. But individuals resist this, for when they extrapolate themselves into the future, whose onset has in fact already begun, they do not see an adequate form of their "self". They therefore idealize past stages and on the basis of their experience and observations of current tendencies seek to return to an earlier age. The particular attractiveness of youth in such situations has already been noted. One's attitude towards this may vary: one may find irony in attempts of individuals to appear young, and one may assert with full justification that just as one cannot turn back the wheel of history, one cannot return to earlier stages of ontogenesis. Our task, however, is merely to understand, and we shall therefore limit ourselves to observations.

"Identity Crisis", "Hypochondria" and the "Death in Object"

Sören Kierkegaard stated that adults are convinced that illusions and doubts belong to youth and no longer have any bearing on themselves. Yet such a view itself is a worse illusion than that of youth.¹ Modern research has shown that many mature individuals display what may be called an "identity crisis". Strictly speaking, that concept is not new, but in the past it was primarily applied to child psychology in characterizing certain features of adolescents. For this term refers to a type of non-correspondence of man to himself, and to man's inability to establish who he is, what his objectives and life perspectives are, how he is perceived by others and what place he holds in a specific social group and in society. But while this concept seems appropriate when applied to adolescents and juveniles, its use in referring to mature persons may at first appear paradoxical.

And yet we believe that there are strong arguments for applying it to adults as well, for it has been observed many times in everyday life and has been often described in literary works. Moreover, the phenomenon can be easily described in psychological terms. There is a declining awareness of new phenomena, a feeling of "lagging behind life", and a declining level of professionalism. A person accustomed to considering himself capable, needed, a good specialist and with his own niche in society discovers that he has changed. Doubts arise concerning one's possibilities, a lack of self-confidence develops as well as a tormenting feeling that one's self-esteem must be reduced. A joyous perception of life's fullness vanishes and is replaced by a sense of depression whose causes are not immediately understood and are eventually experienced as depletion of one's capacities.

In considering age-related changes in the lives of individuals, Hegel drew attention to a related phenomenon that he described as "hypochondria". He rightly observed that the life of an adult human being is primarily concerned with practical matters that are inherently associated with "trivialities" and "details". And while this is, as he notes, entirely

¹ Cf. H. Burkhardt, *Dimensionen Menschlicher Wirklichkeit*, Schweinfurt, 1965, S. 207-208.

in the nature of things, for any action is inevitably concerned with details, an absorption in such details may be quite painful, and the impossibility of an immediate realization of ideals may lead to a state of hypochondria.

“Hardly anyone has been able to avoid at least in some small measure this hypochondria. Its symptoms, moreover, are more pronounced when it arises later in life, and in the case of individuals possessing a weak nature it may last throughout their lives. Individuals who are in such a state do not want to part with their subjectivity, and are unable to overcome their aversion to reality. This is why they find themselves in a state of relative incapacitation that may easily become genuine.”¹

It is impossible to specify a precise time for the onset of this crisis in personality development. This largely depends on the specific characteristics of an individual's life that vary greatly both in time and in the intensity with which the corresponding phenomena express themselves. Instead let us consider their substance, i.e., let us try to establish the cause of the “identity crisis” and “hypochondria” of mature persons finding themselves at their prime of life.

It would appear that the answer to this question must be sought in both changes associated with the appearance of new generations that influence the specific course of individual age-related stages, and specific features that characterize the individual's activities. We have already analysed both these questions in general terms. We shall now consider them in the context of social situations governing the development of mature individuals.

Adults between the age of 40 and 50 years occupy an intermediate position between their parents, who at that time have reached old age, and their children, who usually are completing school and are starting an independent life. Above all this results in the restructuring of family life. The older members retire, require greater care, and generally “move into the background”, leaving greater scope for social and professional activities, and passing on life's major responsibilities to the intermediate generation. The value norms of mature persons begin to play a leading role in so-

¹ Cr. W. F. Hegel, *System der Philosophie*, p. 105.

cial life as they apply all the means of human activity that were developed in human history and further perfected during the history of their own generation to assert their tastes, their style of life and style of activity. In effect they become tone-setters (in that word's broadest sense). As a rule individuals achieve a peak in their professional and social career at this age and control activities in the most diverse social spheres. This is the age when many persons become leading administrators, scientists and coordinators of scientific research. Their own well-being also attains its highest level (housing, household appliances, etc.). In short, today as before, mature individuals occupy a central position in society's social and age-related structure and constitute "transmission belts" of political, social and economic mechanisms. Socially this role is especially important.

At the same time as individuals reach the highest point of their "flight trajectory", their apogee, in many respects they deplete the "energies" (we are using this term exclusively in a figurative sense) that have placed them in "orbit". Operating like the stages of a rocket, childhood, adolescence and youth have completed their contributions to the common task and freed the satellite from the weight of the empty tanks putting it safely in orbit. But the energy that has been spent cannot be replaced, and from this moment forward the satellite can only move by inertia, making use of the acceleration that it has received, for it retains only resources needed for manoeuvring.

This is merely a simile and we cannot expect it to have the force of universal law. The picture of a mature person as one moving through the inertia derived from preceding stages of acceleration is intended to help us, in the absence of experimental data, to "formulate" our hypothesis concerning some of the causes underlying the psychological manifestations of maturity. Let us now attempt to substantiate our point with concrete psychological phenomena.

We have already explained the meaning of the "highest orbit point" in man's flight into maturity. It is now important to clarify the meaning that we attach to the image of the "satellite" driven by inertia and being manoeuvred. This may be inferred from the nature of a mature individual's activities. At this stage individuals have generally achieved one or more major personal creative goals: they may have made a discovery, helped to rationalize the eco-

nomic, technical or social sphere, or introduced their own pedagogical programme with regard to their children. At preceding stages of life, these "objects" of an individual's life activities absorbed all his forces and required the greatest effort. We have seen earlier, however, that object-related activities require specific object-related contents that continuously develop in the course of such activities. Individuals embody their personalities and individualities in such objects and eventually become themselves objectified in their deeds—in discoveries, products of their artistic, technical or social creativity and in the children that they rear. Eventually a period is reached when individuals can carry the object contents of their activities only with difficulty. They are absorbed by the object and "die" in it as they are embodied and realized in it. In particular, parents are embodied in their children who serve as the object of their parental efforts and pedagogical activities; teachers are embodied in their students as objects of educational activities; scientists in their discoveries and in persons who carry forward their scientific activity; artists in their work of art; and workers in the numerous objects produced by their hands. This burden, which is itself quite heavy, is greatly increased by the fact that emerging new elements produced by the continuous process of development threaten to move it into the background. Discoveries become obsolete, children bear their own children and must restructure education in adapting it to new conditions, outdated approaches and methods are succeeded by pioneering ones containing artistic discoveries and new technologies, and the object environment of human habitations experiences turbulent change. All of this may not only produce a "death in object" as a logical completion of an individual's activity in a specific object and as an objectification of capacities, but also sadness, a "hypochondria", and an "identity crisis".

In using these terms almost as synonyms it is necessary to distinguish their meanings and clarify them. The "death of object environments" of the individual is unavoidable. For no matter how imposing and vivid his personality may be, he is helpless before the process of social evolution. He will always remain an instant, even though perhaps a significant instant, in the socio-historical process that transforms the object environment of human life. Nothing can be achieved "forever", for that "forever" will prove to be

an instant in the historical development of the human race, a memorial to that age, a testimony for future ages, but not a crown of development.

Individuals can and many do overcome "hypochondria" by understanding the role and place of their activity in the historical and social process. They not only come to terms with the need for innovation but also engage themselves in innovative activities using the full influence of their social and professional position.

As for the "identity crisis", its resolution is a means for coming to terms with the inevitability of the "death in object", as well as a factor in the overcoming of "hypochondria". Finding themselves in a new social situation of development at the peak of their lives but without the strength to rise further (a "higher point" simply may not exist), individuals may, nevertheless, re-establish an identity with themselves in the new conditions—implying that they find within them a place for their own "selves" and develop corresponding forms of behaviour and modes of activity. This requires honest reflection and rigorous self-analysis. In the scientific environment that is closest to us, a scientist experiencing a "death in object" as well as elements of "hypochondria" resolves that crisis best through the institution of education, by transmitting his scientific legacy to a student who will continue his task.

It may be objected that it is too early for a scientist who is 50-55 years old and at the pinnacle of his creative capacities to be concerned with the "death in object". Many persons do hold such a point of view. In fact it is difficult to find a scientist who at the peak of his career would admit that he is already "dead" in terms of creativity, has depleted his possibilities, and has already done "everything". That is so human, and there also exist impressive examples of creative longevity.

"Youth's Old Age" or "Old Age's Youth"?

The images underlying the title of this section are those of the French romantic poet Victor Hugo. He used these words to describe the essence of that stage in human life when a person finds himself at the borderline of maturity and old age but does not fully belong to either. Today this

same period is described far less poetically as "pre-senile". Conventionally this may be associated with the fifties, which some describe as a "jubilee", while others refer to the French expression "l'âge de décroissement" (the declining age). But it is not names that matter. There is evidence that this is a specific transitional age in human life that may be described as a specific age crisis, one, moreover, that has been little studied. The evidence is as follows.

It is known that the French philosopher Auguste Comte, the "father of positivism", entered a religious phase at the age of 50 that had nothing in common with the ideas of positivism. Similarly Beethoven turned to mystical themes in his works during that period of his life, even though on the whole his creative legacy is far removed from mysticism. Finally, we find in the works of Dmitri Ovsianiko-Kulikovski, the Russian literary scholar, interesting commentaries on Lev Tolstoy's *Confessions*. Rightly viewing this work as autobiographical, Ovsianiko-Kulikovski observed that at that time Tolstoy had reached a transitional age of approximately 50 years (Tolstoy was then 47), i.e., an age when a person's inner world is made more complex by feelings, thoughts and dispositions that have been long in preparation but only now come to full and lucid expression. This age—a turning point in psychological life—is as sharp as the one experienced in early youth. Both are marked by a specific state that visibly includes an "unexplained" yearning, a spiritual oppression, *taedium vitae*, and sometimes thoughts of death.

We have discussed the onset of an age crisis during a transition from maturity to old age in terms of such phenomena as "death in object", "hypochondria" and "identity crisis". We wish to further develop the subject in the following way: the "identity crisis", or a temporary loss of identity with one's own "self" is resolved in mature persons through activities in which they seek to find their own place in a new social situation of development and to renew their personalities in changing life conditions. We have already noted that this is a relatively universal task that is resolved in different ways by children, adolescents and young persons. It is also solved by mature persons, but here a philosophical aspect is also present in addition to practical activities.

We refer to practical activities as a means for over-

coming an "identity crisis". By this we mean that, in the words of Johann Friedrich Herder, the German philosopher, man is not simply a more perfect machine in the hands of nature, but rather views his own self as the aim and objective of work. Accordingly, man's entire organization should be viewed in terms of his activities. Let us emphasize this point once more by citing the words of the great German poet Johann Friedrich Schiller. He noted that nature not only assigns animals and plants a mission, but also carries out that mission itself, while in the case of man, it only assigns him his mission and leaves its execution to man. That "self-orientation of man", incidently, has been reflected in numerous myths that represent man as having come from a more perfect world,—a "golden age" or "paradise". Today our expressions are more rational: man is that which he has made of himself, and his personality is the product of his own activities. But we have already considered this point. In the present context we will merely note that during the transition from maturity to old age as well, activity continues to play a leading role in personality development.

As for the philosophical element and a certain disposition to contemplate that progress with age, it is an inevitable product of man's self-reflection, of his evaluation of his life course, and of a preliminary "summing up". It is only "preliminary" since the active phase of life is not yet concluded, though it does begin to yield to the creative activity of the next generation. In order to re-establish one's "identity with the species" and renew one's active powers during the period when the first signs of aging appear (some researchers believe that this takes place after the age of 45, while others associate such changes with either earlier or later periods), man must display not only practical activities but also mobilize his will and spiritual qualities and maintain a healthy spirit in a body that is increasingly subject to illness and ailments. Man's body, revenging itself over spirit, attunes his soul and intellectual and emotional world to "philosophical reflection" (we have placed these words in quotation marks to indicate that in the present context we are referring not to professional philosophical thinking but a certain less rigorous though widespread inclination of man to perceive the phenomena in his life in generalized terms). As he surveys his past man

acquires a new vision, as it were, of major events in his biography, evaluates them in a new way in the light of his life experience and at a time when nothing more can be changed in the past and there are no grounds for anticipating substantial personality changes in the future. For everyone knows how long he has already lived but no one knows how much longer he is destined to live. In such a situation the individual experiences for the first time a state of static stability, a certain fullness and completeness in which life as a process of direct experience, absorbing all thoughts and feelings without leaving room and time for pausing, stops, as it were, and confronts man's consciousness as a completed plastic image that lends itself to contemplation. And contemplating himself as a product of his life and a product of his efforts, man reflects upon himself with particular intensity.

This is vividly described by Yuri Olesha, the well-known Soviet writer, in his *Not a Day Without a Line*: "... to have lived to old age is a fantastic experience. I mean this quite seriously. For after all I could have not lived as long. But I have, and what is fantastic is that I feel as if I am being shown to others. Since my capacity to "see" continues to function and remains as it had been in infancy, it is with a feeling of youth and freshness that I perceive myself today when I am old, and that old man is altogether new for me—for I repeat, I might not have seen him, or in any case for many years I did not think that I would see him. And suddenly ... an old man is looking at me from the mirror. It is fantastic!" Later he also observes that "...there are now two of us—myself and this other person. When I was young I also changed, but imperceptibly remaining almost the same person throughout the better part of my life. But now there is such sharp change, I am altogether different. I greet you, but who are you? I am—you. No, that is not true!" What a complex gamut of feelings and of contradictory emotions!

It is the fact that in the years ahead only minimal changes and "corrections" will be possible and that little energy and time will be left that imparts particular intensity and sharpness to this self-analysis (unlike the self-analysis of adolescents or young persons). This is a painful transition from a state of maximal and turbulent activity to its gradual curtailment and limitation by health and a paucity of crea-

tive power, as well as a need to yield one's place to the new generation. However, today a man of 50 to 60 does not yet perceive himself as "old" and at the time of official retirement (in the USSR it is 55 years for women and 60 for men), he makes his last efforts to return to active work. For unfortunately we perceive old age as being deprived of the charm of youth. We are proud of youth and lament old age. We turn to subterfuge and cosmetic manipulation in seeking to hide the signs of old age. But is that phenomenon actually so repulsive that man, rather than appearing old, prefers to appear ridiculous in seeking to conceal his true age? We shall attempt to answer this question by analyzing old age as a specific life stage.

CHAPTER 7

OLD AGE

“O the old manhood of me, my
noblest joy of all!
My children and grand-children,
my white hair and beard,
My largeness, calmness, maj-
esty, out of the long
stretch of my life.”
Walt Whitman, “A Song of Joys”

Life's Last Questions

The Mirror of Old Age

Old Age in the Modern World

Longevity and Long Life

Aged Persons as Individuals

Life's Last Questions

Old age is man's most paradoxical and contradictory stage of life. It is a time when life's last questions arise with full intensity, allowing no illusions and demanding solutions to what is unresolvable. For as long as mankind remembers itself and for as long as it has sought to solve the eternal riddle of the human "self", it has sought to unravel the mysteries of old age, unrelenting in its efforts to reach true understanding and seeking again and again to find the meaning of the phenomenon.

The legendary Buddha, who according to tradition was a royal descendent of North India's Shakya tribe (Shakya-muni, one of Buddha's names, means "the hermit from the Shakya"), pleaded with his father, Kudgodan, for deliverance from two evils—old age and death. He conquered the god of death—the evil demon Mara—and after discovering the cause of suffering and the way to overcome it, died at the age of 80 on the day of a May full moon in 544 B.C. This is the traditional narrative—one of the human race's most vivid and poetic, concerning the eternal struggle between life and death and overcoming old age's infirmity.

Man's legends concerning old age are innumerable as are the aphorisms concerning its meaning. Martin Luther, one of the leaders of Protestantism, uttered gloomily that "old age is a living grave". This view reflected the spirit of the time and was shared by his contemporaries. Today greater popularity is enjoyed by aphorisms in the light humoristic spirit of André Maurois: "Old age is a bad habit for which active people have no time". Between these two extremes there is a chasm of human opinions, each possessing its own logic, empirical justification, and meaning.

But we do not find the answer to the most important question, namely, what is old age? At any rate, from the psychological point of view. What is its place among human life stages and what is its meaning for modern man?

Taking exception to the pessimism of prevailing concepts of old age expressed in the saying that "old age is not a happy time", psychologists refer to the special type

of new psychological formations characteristic of old age that are said to be neither better nor worse than those of adolescence or youth. Rather, they are said to be different and possess a deep meaning and special purpose. The disintegration of the personality, moreover, that is usually associated with old age, is said not to be necessarily a degenerative phenomenon but to possess its own specific aesthetics and life force.

Hegel, in particular, understood this well. In his *Philosophy of the Spirit* he viewed the disintegration of personality in old age as a natural rather than a pathological process. Moreover, he associated it with what we would call today a positive "new personality formation". According to Hegel, an aged person has already renounced his hopes to realize his ideals, has experienced a "death in object" and does not expect anything new from the future. "On the contrary, he believes that he already knows what is universal and essential in all that he may encounter."¹

This is why the mind of an aged person is mostly directed towards the past. In a certain sense old age is a reversion to childhood. As in the case of childhood, it does not know any contradictions. The circle is closed as the spirit returns to itself. Only the physical organism—the unreasoning body—continues through force of habit activities that now no longer constitute a process, and move, according to Hegel, towards an abstract negation of the living individual towards death. The personality is thus completed in a certain "specific totality of changes produced by interactions of the species with individuals."² It records itself in time and space as a representative of the species that has effected its own small contribution to its development. This then is Hegel's view, which impresses because unlike purely empirical definitions of old age and attempts to reduce its meaning to an aphorism (as a philosopher would say, to „abstract universality"), he seeks to provide a concept of old age, i.e., to understand it. This is also our own objective, but let us proceed towards it through a specific psychological analysis of old age rather than in terms of philosophical generalizations and attempt to find its meaning as a psychological phenomenon.

¹ G. W. F. Hegel, *System der Philosophie*, p. 108.

² *Ibid.*, p. 109.

The Mirror of Old Age

Ever since the times of ancient mythology the human race has been interested in comparing the world of childhood with that of old age. Let us recall a song sung by venerable old men in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*:

*But we, our age-enfeebled limbs unfit
For martial toils, inglorious here remain,
The staff supporting our wear steps, like children:
For as the infant years have not attained
The military vigour, withered age...¹*

Many analogies have been drawn between childhood and old age and while these are always formal, they are not without interest. Above all one is struck by the "mirror-like character" of old age and childhood. While childhood marks the beginning of life, its "dawn", old age marks its end, or "dusk"; while the child's organism is incredibly plastic, that of an aged person has reached its greatest rigidity. In visiting friends or acquaintances whom we have not seen for a long time, we are surprised at how much their children have grown and how they have changed. Most often this is not merely a "conventional phrase", but quite a genuine expression of surprise at the development of a young being. But when we meet an aged acquaintance in the street we say with equal sincerity: "You have not changed at all!" And once more we are being truthful, for persons usually age suddenly and this is often followed by a latent, steady period in which there are few changes, particularly in persons who live to a very old age.

Childhood resists the external world and assumes a "contrasting" attitude. In old age, on the other hand, man confronts the universe's disintegrating factor. Gradually, the dominance of childhood's "egoistic" governing principle underlying growth and development as well as health and potentialities yields to a dominance of external forces and the role of individual experience declines. Speaking of natural philosophy, Frederick Engels wrote that

"it could do this only by putting in place of the real but as yet unknown interconnections ideal, fancied ones, filling in the missing facts by fig-

¹ Aeschylus, "Agamemnon", in: *The Plays of Aeschylus*. Translated into English by Robert Potter, London and New York, p. 124.

ments of the mind and bridging the actual gaps merely in imagination. In the course of this procedure it conceived many brilliant ideas and foreshadowed many later discoveries, but it also produced a considerable amount of nonsense, which indeed could not have been otherwise.”¹

There is a sense in which these views concerning childhood and old age have meaning, although today we would not formulate them as principles and much less rely on their proportions.

There have also been more direct analogies between childhood and old age, such as the absence of spiritual cares, muted feelings, their “childishness”, short temper, a readiness for laugh and crying, risibility, talkativeness, awkwardness of movements, the body’s precarious equilibrium, uncertain gait, missing teeth, need for soft and sweet foods, uneven speech, high tones of voice, and uncontrolled urination.

The child arrives at a realisation of his position in society and in the world by comparing himself with adults. Jean-Paul Sartre in *Les mots* observed that children are deprived of their own support in the real world—they are artificially separated from reality. This is a profound thought providing that one does not then interpret it as does existentialism in terms of a “cursed consciousness” that finds not much to support it in the real world. For our part we interpret this thought in our own way and refer to Sartre only because he has indeed expressed one of life’s paradoxes. In short, the child is artificially separated from reality by such socializing institutions as care, upbringing and learning in schools. For no matter how valuable in itself childhood may be as a stage of human life and how valuable in itself the work of individuals in developing themselves at the very earliest stages of ontogenesis, its aim lies in maturity and in an adult state and this is recognized not only by scientists but by children themselves. Similarly, although with some differences, old persons, too, are separated from reality. Moreover, that separation, too, is artificial, for retirement is not a law of nature, but a social in-

¹ Frederick Engels, “Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy”, in: Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, in three volumes, Vol. 3, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1976, pp. 364-65.

stitution for providing for persons in their old age that has developed in the course of civilization, in which in the past old age was viewed as an illness, a debility, and a loss of capacity to work. Yet we believe that while such a view of old age does possess historical justification, it has become controversial today. For does it really describe today's aged person?

Old Age in the Modern World

As a specific age phenomenon in human life old age is evolving rapidly in the 20th century. Today aged persons have become an important element in social structures. The notion that old age corresponds to 50-60 has vanished. Since the late 18th century mortality in that age group has declined by 4 times. Today realistic life expectancy is 75 years since recently mortality has declined by one-half for persons who are in their 70s. As a result the populations of all countries have aged considerably, but especially in the so-called "highly developed" countries where individuals retire from work long before they become aged (70-80 years). Today, following his retirement, a person lives on average 15-20 years. This represents a substantial part, approximately one-fourth, of the average lifespan. Can it really be true that a full fourth of the lifetime allotted to an individual is a period of disintegration and waning? Can it really be true that these persons are an "undesired" burden on society, filling poorhouses and old age homes, confined to their beds and distracting "busy people" from important affairs by their need for care and assistance? Of course not!

In particular, as we consider primarily the world's socialist countries, we find that attitudes towards old age that also influence the consciousness of aged persons are undergoing fundamental changes. Much is being done in the USSR to provide social services to aged persons and to ensure that individuals who have retired because of their age or years of service do not merely exist as persons "deprived of life support" and do not feel that they are "not needed" by society. This refers not only to material aspects (the size of pensions continues to increase) nor, of course, only to the fact that the government assumes full responsi-

bility for lonely people in their old age. War veterans, veterans of labour and all persons who have given their strength for the welfare of society, worked in socialist production or fought in defence of their country are given special respect in the USSR as well as special privileges. The termination of one's professional career does not mark the termination of active social life, which is continuing everywhere for old people as much as possible.

Yet there are difficulties which carry psychological implications in solving this problem in our own country as well. Today, 15-20 years of living in old age is 15-20 years away from the satisfaction that is derived from one's work, and in varying degrees this places individuals in a situation of "forced leisure" to which they are not accustomed. This intensifies a feeling of contrast between one's own idleness and society's own active life. Many aged individuals experience that contrast as somewhat demeaning since they are still able to work. That is the reason why socialist states take measures to make it possible for retired persons who wish to work to do so. Still another reason why this is important is that for many persons forced idleness is a pathogenic factor, both physically and psychologically. Accordingly, the right to work following one's retirement constitutes an important gain of socialist society. It has assumed such varied forms as: factory work on a part-time basis (while retaining one's pension), work at home, voluntary social activities, work in public libraries, sharing one's experience with young people, and the supervision of children's clubs. Generally, all such forms of activity serve to resolve the contradiction that emerges between the social character of a human individual who has long found his fullest expression in work and the narrow range of possibilities that are provided by passive forms of rest or participation in family life alone.

This is extremely important, for by its nature one cannot separate work from a healthy way of life. It is well known that persons who avoid work do not generally reach advanced age while those who do, have led a very active life. It would appear that today many persons who have reached advanced age would endorse the words of Michel Montaigne, the French philosopher, who stated that he wished to die at his work. This very sincere statement does

contain a "slight ruse", since it is generally considered that persons who continue to work intensively at an advanced age live longer. And while it is difficult to prove this fact scientifically there is no doubt that it can play a very constructive role as a psychological factor.

At the same time in spite of the generally positive attitude towards the work of aged persons one can also find today a tendency to disregard the past, as if the personal experience of aged individuals were of no importance. After all, it is asserted that one can learn everything from books. In opposing that point of view Ippolit Davidovski, a Soviet gerontologist who has written an interesting study of old age that is striking in its scope and level of philosophical interpretation of problems in modern gerontology, notes that experience and wisdom were always a function of time and that they continue to be a privilege of mature and aged individuals. Gerontology as a science, he adds, is concerned not so much with adding years to one's life as with adding life to a person's years. This view of a contemporary scientist is in keeping with that of Leonardo da Vinci, who maintained that work produces experience, while experience produces wisdom, which is the daughter of experience. The individual experience of aged workers who have not lost their ability to work cannot be replaced by any handbooks or any manuals. Individual experience is not simply a matter of remembering the past, rather it is an ability to orient oneself quickly in the present with the help of one's own unique experience and knowledge as well as that of others. It is true, of course, that experience may be generalized, knowledge may be assimilated and skills may be learned. But one must not underestimate the importance of wisdom as a specific new psychological formation of old age. Wisdom is a specific state of the spirit, a quality based on vast life experience whose role is to establish a link between generations, to free history from chance occurrences and from the daily cares of everyday life; it is simultaneously a vision of the past and the future, as well as of the present; it raises aged persons to the rank of philosophers of life, making them irreplaceable councillors and advisors to youth. Wisdom is a quality that makes an aged person's position in today's world unique in terms of its social and historical significance, and humane through its social function and goal.

Attitudes towards old age that are purely emotional, and hence unscientific, that view it as a degradation, serve to impede scientific studies of that phenomenon and progress in this important sphere of our life and our knowledge. It is true that old age is an integral process that extends to the entire organism, and also that the human body is mortal. Yet Baruch Spinoza was right in saying that no one knows the full capacities of the human body. Here we must turn to the biological limits of human life and ask what are the limits of human longevity?

Longevity and Long Life

What is the natural duration of human life? Ancient Chinese sages, King Solomon, the Greek historian Herodotus, the ancient writers of the Upanishads and the Bible—all agree that it is 70 to 80 years. We read in psalm 90 of the Old Testament that:

*The days of our years are three score years
and ten,
Or even by reason of strength four score years,
Yet is their pride but labour and sorrow;
For it is soon gone, and we fly away.*¹

In complaining in his elegies of the transitory nature of human life, Mimnermus, the ancient Greek poet (7th century B.C.) states that death comes to man at the age of 60. He was opposed in this view by Solon, one of the seven best known Greek sages, who considered the age of 80 to be the natural age of death.

In Medieval society and during the Renaissance, thoughts concerning human life were less optimistic. In his work entitled *De contemptu mundi seu de miseria humana* (On the Contemptible World and on Human Poverty), Pope Innocent III (1161-1216) wrote that few people attain the age of 40, while persons who were 60 years old were a rare exception. In his *Miroir de Mariage* (Mirror of Marriage), Eustache Deschamps, the 14th century French poet, expressed the view that women became old at the age of 30, men—at the age of 50. While he viewed 60 as the limit of human life, he himself lived to the age of 85. As for his assertion that

¹ *The Holy Bible*, Cambridge, Printed at the University Press, 1903, p. 613.

women become old at the age of 30, it should be kept in mind that his contemporaries viewed Deschamps as not only a prominent poet but also as a great misogynist. This was explained, according to the testimony of his contemporaries, by a somewhat less than happy family life. The opinions that have been mentioned are all relatively arbitrary and appear to be based on personal observations.

But there have also been numerous attempts to establish the duration of a human life in a scientific manner. Ever since Antiquity efforts have been made to find a "correlation" (stable correspondence) between the period of growth and life's duration. This hypothesis was first formulated by Aristotle with regard to deers. In the 18th century it was accepted and further developed by Georges Buffon, the French naturalist who based the correspondence on the magical number 7 and asserted that the lifespan of living creatures exceeds their period of growth by seven times. Jean-Pierre Flourens arrived at a figure of 100 by reducing the coefficient to 5 and assuming that the human organism ceases to grow at the age of 20.¹

The views of "naturalists" in the late 19th- early 20th centuries were marked by greater optimism. Academician Ivan Tarkhanov, a Russian physiologist of the 19th century, held the view that man's natural lifespan was 100 years. His Polish contemporary, Jozef Mayer, extended this to 100-110 years. Academician Alexander Bogomolets, a Soviet scientist, concluded that today a person's "normal longevity" is 125-150 years, and stressed that these are not necessarily the upper limits. Ilya Mechnikov, a Russian biologist, held the view that 150 years represented the natural duration of human life.

We believe that while all these views are interesting they cannot solve the problem that they address, for man's natural lifespan is governed by neither magical numbers nor natural-scientific definition. In this respect we do not agree with such scientists as Poland's Edward Rosset, who considers that this is a problem of natural science. As the English biologist Alex Comfort rightly notes, the conclusions of those natural scientists who view man's natural lifespan as being 100 to 200 years are too rash. And the Soviet demog-

¹ Flourens, J. P., *De la longevite humaine et de quantite de la vie sur le globe*, Paris, 1856, p. 86.

rapher Boris Urlanis is of course quite right in reproaching natural scientists studying this problem for their neglect of real life processes and also for disregarding, we will now add, the role of social and cultural factors whose relevance is difficult to overestimate.

But the question still remains: what is the duration of human life? As an ideal that our contemporaries find no less attractive and desirable than did people in past ages, human life is considered limitless and eternal, a thought vividly expressed in the idea of immortality. In our own rational age, however, attitudes towards that ideal are generally skeptical. Today most people do not believe in the possibility of immortality. They interpret it—not without reason—as an essentially theological and religious subterfuge. And even the more optimistically inclined dreamers and scientists prefer to speak of immortality as “an extremely distant prospect”, thus in effect excluding it as a possibility in our time, despite the visible achievements of modern science and medicine and great social and cultural progress. On the other hand, the very real prolongation of the human lifespan today serves to stimulate the wish to prolong it as much as possible. Indeed, a person’s average lifespan in the Bronze Age appears to have been no greater than 18-20 years, in the Roman Empire it was 23 years and had already climbed to 35 years in medieval society, 44 years in the 19th century and 68-72 years in the 1970s in the world’s most developed countries (USSR, socialist countries, USA, Canada, Western Europe). Researchers believe that already in the near future further achievements in both the socio-economic and technological spheres will make possible a further increase in the human lifespan of approximately 10 years. Particularly high hopes, moreover, are placed on social factors (the sum of state, social, cultural and medical measures).

Already today declining child mortality, the eradication of a number of infectious diseases in later years and the improvement of diagnostics and medical treatment have made it possible to extend the average lifespan to 75 years. It may be shown statistically that if it were possible to overcome all cardio-vascular diseases this would extend the average life expectancy of a sixty-year-old person by 8.8 years. Similarly, should it be possible to overcome tumors, infections and accidents, this would add still another 1.5 years.

Such are the potentials of modern medicine.

In short, the modern science of old age is now principally concerned with the concrete and practical task of sustaining human life at some stable level, extending the average lifespan and pushing back the onset of debility. Today a person who has reached the age of 70-90 is approaching the biological time limit that is defined by the properties of the species as well as hereditary and individual properties that still do not lend themselves to full understanding.

But this makes it even more important to study the facts and factors of human longevity as a kind of human challenge to nature. Longevity, which is today viewed as the period extending beyond the age of 90, has always interested scientists. There have been many hypotheses and theories that ultimately consider it either the result of personal traits or local climatic characteristics, the nature of work and everyday life, social environment and heredity. Such prominent Russian medical and biological scientists as I. Mechnikov, A. Bogomolets, and I. Pavlov consider man's natural lifespan to exceed 100 years, and view longevity not as an exception but as a natural physiological phenomenon.

In the West, on the other hand, beginning with Herbert Spencer and August Weismann, there have been many opponents of the idea of extending the human lifespan. Often these scientists come very close to views of primitive societies concerning the need to destroy old people. William Vogt, an American biologist, has earned dubious fame by seeking to show that the human race's salvation requires an increased mortality in the world's over-populated countries. His views are shared by G. F. Winfield, an American sinologist who has deplored declining mortality in modern China, and by Paul Ehrlich, an American biologist, who is the author of a sensational study entitled *The Population Bomb* in which he compares an uncontrolled increase in the Earth's population with a cancerous growth calling for surgical intervention, and more specifically, a reduction of the planet's population to 2 billion persons. One also finds such "specialists" as William Osler, an American physician who has simply proposed that persons approaching the age of 60 be euthanized with the help of chloroform! Jacques Bertillon, a French demographer, is somewhat less radical

in his method, but he, too, insists that the efforts of societies should not be concentrated on prolonging the lives of aged persons.

In the 1920s so-called eugenists associated that premise with "economic" grounds by stressing that a reduction in the number of aged persons would reduce the burden placed on workers. The position of Soviet scientists and their colleagues from socialist countries as well as from progressive scientific circles in the West, however, is based on humanistic principles: they believe that to increase man's lifespan is a major task of modern science and medicine and an important factor in the further progress of social relations. Hence a natural interest on the part of scientists in individuals whose own lives give grounds for optimism in the matter of extending man's present lifespan.

Longevity has always been common in Russia, and in the nineteenth century it was even said that together with Sweden and Norway, it was the most favourable country in that respect. However, that view rested on a relatively superficial acquaintance with the facts. Today, the largest numbers of very aged persons in the USSR are found in the Caucasus. According to census data in 1970 this region's population, which represents approximately 7% of the country's overall population, contributes 16% of all extremely aged persons and 35% of all persons whose age exceeds 100 years. Groups with high proportions of very aged persons are found in Yakutia, Tajikistan, Byelorussia and the Baltic Republics. Studies of longevity (the most comprehensive studies are carried out by the Institute of Ethnography of the USSR Academy of Sciences and by the International Institute for the Study of Human Reproduction in New York) have shown that longevity is influenced by a number of factors. Researchers agree that natural-ecological factors and climate play a significant role and note the particular importance of high mountain districts, for it is there (in Equador and Colombia as well as in the USSR) that very aged persons are found most often. They also stress the role of specific physiological and somatic characteristics. For very aged persons are usually lean, active persons who like fresh air, are free of old age debilities and of organic illnesses. With such persons one also observes "natural" forms of death that are considered "ideal" from the medical point of view.

Aged Persons as Individuals

We have considered old age vertically, as it were, as a certain period of life, that reaches a peak in longevity. But this is only one side of the question, since, as has been rightly noted by Lucius Seneca, "Life like a fable is valued not for its length but for its substance", and also "No matter how much we complain about nature, it conducts itself well: life, if one knows how to make use of it, is quite long." One cannot deny that these observations are reasonable and continue to be valid today. In particular, they continue to apply to gerontology, whose task, as we have noted, is not merely to "add years to life, but to add life to years". What characterizes then the life of aged persons and what are the psychological contents of their individual personalities? We will attempt to penetrate into psychological constitution of aged individuals which is relatively stable and preserves its principal characteristics throughout that entire age period.

Let us first draw a typical psychological portrait of an aged individual. One of today's psychological studies has come up with the following picture:

"Old people are often characterized by a growing lack of self-assurance and dissatisfaction with themselves. Their general disposition is somewhat depressed and marked by anxiety stemming from fears of loneliness, helplessness, impoverishment and death. Old persons become morose, irritable, misanthropic, and pessimistic. Their ability to enjoy life is reduced, and they no longer expect anything good from it. Their interest in the external world and towards new developments declines. They dislike everything, hence their grumpiness and grumbling. They become egoistic and egocentric and more introverted. The range of their interests shrinks, and they tend to dwell on past experiences. At the same time there is an increased interest in their own bodies and in various unpleasant sensations, and one often finds in old age elements of hypochondria. Lack of self-confidence and uncertainty of the immediate future cause old persons to be petty, miserly, overcareful, pedantic, conservative, and unenterprising.

There is a weakening of control over their own reactions and their general control of themselves is poor. Together with a declining intensity in their perception, memory and intellectual activity all these changes create a specific image of an old person and cause all old people to resemble each other to some extent."¹

The picture is rather gloomy, even though Eugene Averbukh, a Soviet psychologist, softens this impression with reservations to the effect that one should not think that all of these changes are equally pronounced in all cases. While this is, of course, correct, one should not be afraid to see the truth as it is, since many of these unpleasant disorders do accompany man's restructuring in old age, a process that is not, as has been noted, exclusively regressive. Old age is a difficult period in a person's life.

In considering this composite portrait of old age more closely one should add that it contains an excessive degree of negative characteristics that are seldom found in a single person. They are also excessive from a typological point of view. In any event the typology itself can be made much more precise. In particular the typology proposed by Fritz Giese, a German gerontologist, distinguishes between three types of old age and of aged persons:

1) the negativist, who denies that he possesses attributes of old age;

2) the extrovert (according to the terminology of Carl Jung) who admits the onset of old age but comes to this acknowledgement through external influences and observing surrounding reality, particularly following retirement (observing the young generation, differences in views and interests with younger persons, the death of relatives and friends, innovations in technology and in social life, a changing position within the family);

3) the introvert, who experiences aging on an intellectual and emotional plane (a dullness in relation to new interests and more lively recollection of the past, an interest in metaphysical questions, decreased mobility, weakened emotions, waning sexual instincts and a desire for tranquility).

¹ E. S. Averbukh, *Rasstroistva psikhicheskoi deyatel'nosti v pozdnem vozraste* (Psychological Disorders in Advanced Old Age), Leningrad, Meditsina Publishers, 1969, pp. 27-28.

In evaluating F. Giese's typology let us note that it is already much closer to the actual phenomenon of old age in the sense that one may "match" many aged persons to one or several types of aging, and evaluate in some measure the corresponding restructuring of their personality. We must, however, recognize that such evaluations will always be approximate since the use of psychological types is simply an analytical method, and we do not meet these types "in pure form" in real life. The use of typology plays a different role. It classifies manifestations of old age thus producing reference norms for both researchers and practitioners that serve as a basis for concrete work with aged individuals. But useful though they may be, typological characterizations have limited applications. In particular, they offer no help in explaining the remarkable creativity of such "exceptional personalities" as Rabindranath Tagore or Johann Sebastian Bach, who possessed surprising creative energies at an advanced age. Similarly, in evaluating ordinary personalities the use of typologies is also often helpless in explaining specific manifestations of aging (sexual, sensory-perceptual, intellectual). According to Boris Ananyev, individuality is characterized by a uniqueness of linkages and mediating relations. And in gaining knowledge of the individuality of an aged person, it is especially important to know the way that individuality has developed throughout its entire ontogenesis. Here the use of typology can only help in establishing the way in which a specific type of aging developed in the course of ontogenesis and the way in which it is related to specific traits of that individual. Unfortunately modern psychology is only just now approaching that level of research and the questions that remain greatly exceed the number of available answers. This is why our description of the psychological contents of the personality of aged individuals is limited to the present level of knowledge.

* * *

Science views human life as a specific process of the age-related changes in personality development. In philosophy the term "process" traditionally refers to a consistent change in a phenomenon and its transition into another phenomenon, governed by certain principles. We have employed an understanding of life stages as a process of personality

transformation that is subject to certain governing principles as the basis of our present study. We have sought to show the history of human life stages by turning repeatedly to the past, for we believe that in the absence of a historical-theoretical analysis, age-related psychology may be turned into a simple description of facts whose mere recording, no matter how detailed, can provide no answer to urgent practical issues. Being linked to the history of the human race through the replacement and successions of generations, age categories are remarkably sensitive to the social and cultural principles that govern man's existence and in many respects represent their embodiments.

We have seen that throughout all of ontogenesis and in all human stages of life a fundamental role in personality development is played by man's object-related activities, which arise within specific social situations of development and which lead to the appearance of major new psychological formations.

The basic directions of personality transformations throughout a person's life result from transformations in his activities, which also underlie the personality's self-development. We have illustrated in terms of several age groups the manner in which specific stages are "assimilated" by individuals and in which they pass from one life stage to the next.

In arriving at these conclusions we are fully aware of the shortcomings of our analysis and recognize that in some parts we have limited ourselves to either a purely descriptive (often metaphoric) factual approach, or else considered hypotheses corresponding to what appeared to be the most probable answers. For we were concerned with providing only a general psychological description and interpretation of age-related changes in human life.

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Man and His Stages of Life

Human life is nature's most valuable and unique creation. Since ancient times people have sought to establish the meaning of all age periods of human existence. But to this day many problems of age-related psychology, ranging from infancy to extreme old age remain unresolved.

In the present study, Soviet psychologist A. Tolstykh has attempted a generalization of the problems of human aging, revealing the present stage of psychological science and describing the achievements of Soviet scientists in that sphere.